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Montana. Motor Vehicle Division
Montana driver's manual 1997-1998

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Montana Driver's Manual

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Dear Fellow Montanan:

No Montanan needs to be told how much time we all spend on the road getting from place to place in this vast state. The distances we travel here and the variety of roads we travel upon make it all the more necessary that we know - and practice - the rules of the road.

This manual is designed to provide Montana drivers with the information they need to drive legally and safely. Please study it carefully and use it as your guide to driving prudently, whether you're traveling across the state or just across town.

If we all follow the regulations outlined here, our streets and highways will be a safer place for travelers.

JOSEPH P. MAZUREK
Attorney General

This manual will give you information on safe driving rules and practices to help you become a safe driver. Be sure to read the manual carefully. Unless you know the information that it contains, you cannot pass the written test. Also read the section describing the skill test. It will tell you what the examiners are looking for and how they score the test.

THE DRIVER LICENSE

Anyone who operates a motor vehicle or motor-driven cycle on public roadways in Montana is required to have a license. The following people can drive on a valid license from their home (State):

Military. Active duty military and their dependents may retain their valid out of state license and drive in Montana UNLESS they become gainfully employed. If employment is secured a Montana license must be obtained. Active duty military personnel who had a valid Montana license upon entry into active duty may drive on that license up to 30 days after separation. These persons must renew license during the 30 day grace period to avoid penalty of testing. Must present DD214 papers.

New Residents. If you move to Montana from another state and establish a permanent residence, you must obtain a Montana driver's license. If you have a valid driver license issued by the state from which you moved, you can still use it up to 90 days, *(30 days for commercial drivers)*, after which time you must surrender it and qualify for a Montana license. Out of state drivers who hold a valid out of state license, may exchange their basic driver license for a Montana driver license, without a written or drive test. If in the examiner's discretion the applicant may experience difficulty in the safe operation of a motor vehicle a written and drive test may be given. You may have only one valid license in your possession at any time.

You may obtain a driver license if you:

- Are at least 15 years of age and have passed a driver's education course approved by the department and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- Are able to submit proof of name, age, and address
- Have parental/guardian consent if under age 18
- Pass needed driver license tests
- Turn in any other drivers license
- Have not had your license suspended, revoked, or denied in any state
- Pass needed medical requirements for the type of driver license desired
- Have not been found by a court to be mentally incompetent, alcoholic, or a habitual user of illegal drugs

Montana Licenses and Permits

To be eligible for a learner's license you must be at least 15 years of age and successfully completed an approved driver's education course. To obtain the learner's license, you will be required to pass the knowledge test and vision test. If you are under age 18, you must also have a consent form signed by a parent/guardian. Signing obligates you to accept financial responsibility for any damage resulting from the minors operation of a motor vehicle. The permit is good for 6 months from the date receipts are purchased.

Learner's License – This license allows you to operate a motor vehicle when supervised by another driver who is licensed to drive that kind of vehicle. In all vehicles except motorcycles, the licensed driver must sit in the right front seat. On motorcycles, the licensed driver must follow the learner.

Instructian Permit – If you are enrolled in an approved driver education course, you may operate a motor vehicle during training while you are under the direct supervision of the driver education teacher. The instruction permit is only valid for the period you are enrolled in the course.

Traffic Education Learners License – The department may issue a traffic education learner's license to any person who is at least 14½ years of age and who has successfully completed or is successfully participating in a traffic education course approved by the department and the superintendent of public instruction. A traffic education learner license entitles the licensee to operate a motor vehicle only when accompanied by an approved instructor or licensed parent or guardian and may be restricted to specific times or areas.

Motorcycle Learner's License – Issued on driver license receipt and good for 6 months from purchase of receipt when validated by examiner.

Motarcycle Endorsement – A motorcycle endorsement is necessary to operate a motorcycle or any motorized two-wheel, three-wheel, or quadricycle vehicle classified as a motorcycle, on public roadways. To be eligible for a motorcycle endorsement, you must hold or be eligible for a Class [D] driver's license. You must pass vision, knowledge and skill tests, except that you may not be required to take the knowledge or skill test if you hold a valid motorcycle license from another licensing jurisdiction. To prepare for the knowledge test, you will need to get the motorcycle operator manual.

Class [D] License – (Regular Operator's License) A Class [D] license permits you to drive an automobile or any other four-wheel vehicle under 26,000 pounds gross vehicle weight, and you do not transport more than 15 passengers or carry materials defined as "hazardous materials." In order to obtain your license, you need to pass the vision, knowledge and skill tests. You may not have to test if you hold a valid license from another jurisdiction.

Commercial Definitions:

Type 1 – allows a driver to operate a commercial motor vehicle in interstate commerce. Required to be 21. You must pass all requirements in CFR 49.

Type 2 – allows a driver to operate a commercial motor vehicle only within the State of Montana. Required to be 18.

Class [C] License – (Commercial License) The operator of a commercial vehicle must have a Commercial Montana Driver's License. Class [C] vehicles means any single vehicle, or combination of vehicles, that does not meet the definition of Class [A] or Class [B] as defined below, but that either is designed to transport 16 or more passengers including the driver, or is placarded for hazardous materials.

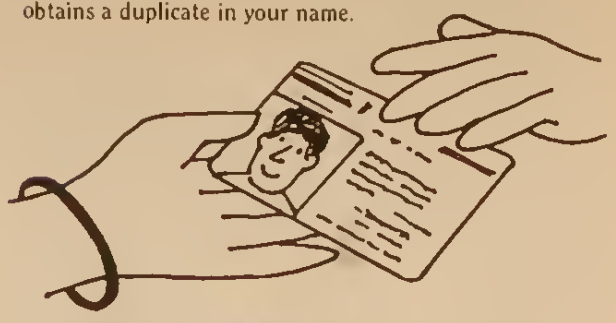
Class [B] License – A Class [B] license allows you to operate any single unit vehicle with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of 26,001 or more pounds, or any such vehicle towing a vehicle not in excess of 10,000 pounds GVWR. To obtain a license, you will need to pass vision and knowledge tests, as well as a skill test in the size vehicle you wish to drive. You may not have to take the skill test if you hold a valid Class [B] license, or its equivalent, from another licensing jurisdiction. To prepare for the Class [B] knowledge and skill tests, you will need to obtain a copy of the "Commercial Driver License (CDL) Manual". If you desire to obtain a CDL, there are other requirements listed in the CDL manual. (Holders of a Class [B] license may, with any appropriate endorsements, operate all vehicles within Group [C].)

Class [A] License – A Class [A] license allows you to operate any combination of vehicles (e.g., tractor-trailer), with a Gross Combination Weight Rating (GCWR) of 26,001 or more pounds provided the GVWR of the vehicles being towed is in excess of 10,000 pounds. To obtain a Class [A] license, you will have to pass a vision test, as well as special knowledge and skill tests. For road tests, you must furnish a vehicle of the size and type that you intend to drive. To prepare for the Class [A] knowledge and skill test, you will need a copy of the "Commercial Driver License" (CDL) manual. If you desire to obtain a CDL, there are other requirements listed in the CDL manual. (Holders of a Class [A] license may, with appropriate endorsements, operate all vehicles within Classes [B] and [C].)

Identification Card – I.D. Cards are available to anyone. You must provide proof of name and birthdate (birth certificate, passport, or any legal document that will verify your date of birth) have your photo taken, pay an $8.00 fee. The cards are valid for 4 years from your last birth date.

Fees – The fee for all licenses and permits listed is $4.00 per year. The fee for a motorcycle endorsement is $0.50 per year. Driver license receipts are valid for 6 months from date purchased. A Montana driver's license will not be issued to anyone under the age of 16 years unless they have passed the driver education course approved by the Department of Justice and Superintendent of Public Instruction and are at least 15 years of age.

Lost or Destroyed Licenses – If your license is lost or destroyed you may apply for a duplicate at your local licensing station. You will be required to pay a $5.00 fee. Present proper identification to the examiner, such as a birth certificate, passport or any legal document that will verify your date of birth. This identification is needed not only to establish your identity but to insure no one else obtains a duplicate in your name.



Driver License Renewal

Prior to October 1, 1995, all driver's license were issued with a four year expiration date, occurring on the driver's birthdate four or less years after the date of issuance. After October 1, 1995, the length of a driver's license will depend on several factors, such as your age at the time of initial licensure or renewal and the day of your birth.

- If you are under 21, your license will expire on your 21st birthday.
- If you are between the ages of 21 and 75 and you have an odd-numbered birthday (such as November 11), your license will expire on your birthday 8 years or less after the date of issue or upon your 75th birthday, whichever first occurs.
- If you are between the ages of 21 and 75 and you have an even-numbered birthday, your license will expire on your birthday four years or less after the date of issue.
- If you are 75 years of age or older, your license will expire on your birthday four years or less after the date of issue.

You may renew your license up to six months before the expiration date of your license on your birthday. If your license has expired it is not valid for operation of a motor vehicle, however a renewal may be completed within three months after the expiration without retesting. However, if your birthday passes and you have not renewed, your driving privilege STOPS on your birthday and if you are found driving after your birthday, you are driving in violation of the law and are eligible for a citation. If your license is more than 3 months expired, you must take and pass the written and driving test.

In order to renew your driver license, you must pay the proper fee, come into an exam station, pass the vision test, and have a new photo taken. If in the examiners discretion the applicant may experience difficulty in the safe operation of a motor vehicle a drive test may be given. To make sure your license to drive is kept current, you must notify the Field Operations Bureau of the Department of Justice within 10 days of any change of name or address. (Forms for this purpose can be obtained from most county treasurers, a patrolman, or any driver license examiner.) This is important, as the licensing authority may wish to contact you regarding your driver's license at any time. If they are unable to contact you , you could lose your driving privilege because you were not aware of orders or requirements which affect your privilege to drive.

No person who is currently suspended or revoked in any state may apply for, or retain a Montana drivers license.

Voter Registration

Anyone wishing to register to vote may do so at any Montana Driver License office. The Voter Registration Form will be forwarded to the proper Election Administrator and a Voter Registration Card will be provided to the applicant by mail.

Anyone who did not vote in the last Presidential Election should fill out a Voter Registration Card.

Organ Donation

There are several reasons to be an organ donor. Some of which are: to save another's life; to improve the life of someone; to contribute to the advancement of medical science. By signing a donor card, having it witnessed and carrying it with your license. Be sure to discuss your participation with relatives, physician, and friends.

Donor cards are available from your physician, a hospital, and all Montana driver licensing offices. If you change your mind and do not want to participate, destroy the donor card and inform your family and physician. Donor Cards available in Montana conform to the Anatomical Gift Act that has been adopted in all fifty states. Organ donor pamphlets containing more information are available in all driver licensing stations or by calling 1-800-332-9066.

Keeping The Driver License

Realizing the need to exercise control over the users of Montana's highways for the protection of our citizens, the Legislature has established certain actions to be taken to withdraw the license or driving privilege of those persons who violate traffic laws or are otherwise not entitled to the use of our highways. Many people get into serious trouble with their driver's license because they do not understand or inform themselves of the legal responsibilities of having a license. There are three separate actions that can be taken against the driver's license or privilege to drive. They are:

Suspension

A license or driving privilege which is temporarily withdrawn, and restored when eligible. Examples of suspension include:

1. First offense Driving Under the Influence, or operating with a Blood Alcohol Content of .10 or greater ..... Six months suspension
2. Minor in possession of alcohol ..... Suspension ranges from 60 days second offense to 1 year depending on age and whether driving or not at time of incident.
3. Person under age of 21 with a blood alcohol content of .02 or greater ..... 90 day suspension–1st offense; 6 months–2nd; 1 year–3rd or subsequent.
4. Child support ..... Indefinite suspension until in compliance
5. Careless or negligent driving ..... Up to one year suspension
6. Fail to submit to re-examination ..... Indefinite, or until requirements are met
7. Multiple violations ..... May result in warning or suspension of six months
8. Refusal of Preliminary Alcohol Screening Test ..... 6 months first offense
9. Refusal to submit to alcohol testing (Implied Consent) ..... 6 months first offense
10. Unlawful use of a driver's license ..... 6 month suspension
11. Habitually reckless or negligent driver ..... 6 month suspension
12. Nonpayment of fines, or non appearance on notice to appear ..... Indefinite, until notified by court of compliance
13. Unsatisfied judgment ..... 6 years
14. Fraudulent application for a license to drive ..... Six month suspension
15. Medical ..... Indefinite

Operator's of commercial vehicles are subject to additional sanctions when the violation occurs while operating a commercial motor vehicle. Please refer to the Commercial Drivers Manual for further information.

Revocation

A revocation is a termination of the license for a specific reason, and may not be renewed or restored. When allowed, the individual must reapply for a new license upon meeting certain requirements.

1. Second offense (within 5 years) Driving Under the Influence of intoxicating liquor/drugs or operating a motor vehicle with a Blood Alcohol Content of .10 or greater ..... 2nd or subsequent offense 1 year revocation
2. Minor in possession of alcohol ..... 3rd or subsequent offense if under 18 and driving, one year or until age 18 (whichever is last).
3. Under the age of 21 with a Blood Alcohol Concentration of .02 or greater ..... 3rd or subsequent offense 1 year or until age 18 whichever is last.
4. Fail to Stop and Render Aid ..... One year
5. Felony drug conviction ..... One year
6. Felony in which a motor vehicle was used ..... One year
7. Habitual Traffic Offender ..... Three years
8. 2nd or subsequent offense for refusal to submit to alcohol testing (implied consent) within 5 years ..... One year
9. Negligent homicide ..... One year
10. Negligent vehicle assault ..... One year
11. Perjury ..... One year
12. Possession of intoxicating substance under 21 ..... 3rd offense one year if under 18
13. Preliminary Alcohol Screening Test ..... One year 2nd or subsequent offense
14. Three reckless driving within one year ..... One year

Cancellation

A cancellation is a license that is annulled and terminated because a person is no longer entitled to such license, and they may reapply for another license upon meeting certain requirements.

1. Death of person signing minor's application
2. Fraud, and/or falsifying information on application for a license to drive
3. Paying for driver license services with non sufficient funds check
4. Removal of parental consent
5. Voluntary surrender of license
6. Suspended or revoked in another state

With any suspension, revocation, or cancellation certain requirements must be met before a license to drive may be reissued. These requirements may include, but not limited to: $100 reinstatement fee, filing proof of financial responsibility for 3 years, completion of treatment programs, surrender of old driver's license, retaking driver examination and recommendation of the court. Certain suspensions and revocations allow for "work" or "probationary" licenses. **Contact the Motor Vehicle Division; 303 N Roberts PO Box 201430 Helena 59620 (telephone 406-444-3288) or your nearest driver examiner for details on a specific situation.**

Habitual Traffic Offender Program

When determined by the record that an individual has thirty (30) habitual offender points within a three (3) year period, the Records and Driver Control Bureau revokes the license for a period of three years. A person revoked as an Habitual Traffic Offender may apply for a probationary license after serving one year of the three year revocation if eligible. Depending on the past driving history proof of financial responsibility must be filed with the Division, all driver license fees must be paid and tests completed before a license is issued.

Offense	*Points*
Deliberate homicide	15
Negligent homicide (vehicular)	12
Negligent Vehicular Assault	12
Felonies (vehicular)	12
DUI	10
BAC .10 or greater	10
Driving while suspended or revoked	6
Reckless driving (driving with willful and wanton disregard for the safety of persons and property)	5
Drag racing	5
Insurance violations	5
Hit and run (Property)	4
Speeding	3
No driver's license (over 180 days)	2
Other moving violations	2

A person driving while an Habitual Traffic Offender may be imprisoned for a period not to exceed 1 year, fined not more than $1,000 or both. In addition, an additional 1 year revocation of the license or privilege to drive will be imposed.

Right to hearing

You may challenge the seizure and suspension or revocation of your driver's license and/or driving privileges by filing a petition in district court, as provided in Mont. Code Ann. 61-8-403.

License plate/driver license suspension for no insurance

Your vehicle license plates will be suspended for 90 days second offense, 180 days third offense for not having liability insurance in vehicle, fail to carry proof of insurance, or fail to exhibit proof to officer upon demand. In addition, proof of insurance for the vehicle in question must be sent to the Motor Vehicle Division to release suspension.

The driver's license may be suspended for a fourth offense of a violation of the insurance laws if so ordered by the court. The driver's license remains suspended indefinitely until proof of insurance is sent to the Motor Vehicle Division.

Problem Driver Pointer System (PDPS)

Montana is connected to a nation-wide computer system that will search a common computer data base to determine if a new applicant for a driver's license is currently suspended or revoked in any jurisdiction. If you are, you may not make application or renew a license to drive in Montana until your previous driving status is no longer suspended or revoked.

Driving While Suspended or Revoked

Any person who drives while their license or privilege to drive is suspended or revoked in Montana or in any other state may be fined not more than $500, sentenced to a minimum of two days in jail and have an additional "like" period of suspension or revocation added to their record. In addition, a person operating a motor vehicle while their license is suspended or revoked for an alcohol offense will have their vehicle seized and rendered inoperable by the county for 30 days.

Alcohol Ignition Interlock Program

Allows the court to order an interlock device installed for anyone convicted of DUI/BAC in lieu of a suspension or revocation of their licenses.

A court may order an alcohol interlock device be installed in person's vehicle restricting a DUI/BAC defendant to only driving a motor vehicle equipped with a functioning ignition interlock device, and require the individual to pay the reasonable cost of leasing, installing, and maintaining the device if:

1. court determines that an approved device is reasonable available and;
2. defendant's BAC at the time of arrest was .18 or greater, or;
3. the defendant previously has been convicted of a DUI/BAC.

The department will administrative stay the suspension/revocation of the driver's license pending certain requirements. The device installation must run parallel to the time period for DUI/BAC suspension or revocation.

The stay and installation will remain until the period of suspension or revocation has expired, and any required alcohol course, treatment or both have been completed. A person under suspension or revocation for another offense such as refusal of the breath test would not be eligible to participate in the program.

It is unlawful:

1. for a person subject to restriction to an interlock device to operate a motor vehicle not equipped with an ignition interlock device, to knowingly assist a person who is restricted to the use of an ignition interlock device to start and operate the restricted person's vehicle, knowingly circumvent the operation of an ignition interlock device, or remove alcohol device before period of restriction has expired.

The department must lift the stay, and resuspend or revoke if they receive a conviction from a court of law for violation of the restrictions, information from the ignition interlock vendor that the person has violated the ignition interlock restriction by tampering with the device, removing the device before the period of restriction has expired, and/or violated the agreement with the interlock provider/vendor. Law mandates that no probationary license be issued when the suspension or revocation has been reinstated due to a violation of the use or restriction of the device.

*DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Montana law provides that a person with an alcohol concentration of .04% but less than .10% *may* be charged with DUI if that fact is considered with other competent evidence. A person convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol, other drugs or having a blood alcohol content of .10% or greater shall be punished as follows:

1st conviction – Not less than 24 consecutive hours or more than 60 days in jail (10 days BAC). Fine of not less than $100 or more than $500 and six month suspension of driver's license and/or driving privilege.

2nd Conviction (within 5 years) – Not less than 7 days, at least 48 hours of which must be served consecutively, or more than 6 months in jail (30 days BAC). Fine of not less than $300 or more than $500 and 1 year Revocation of driver's license and/or driving privilege. You must also complete an alcohol information course and treatment before you can apply for a driver's license.

3rd or subsequent conviction (within 5 years) – Not less than 30 days, at least 48 hours of which must be served consecutively, or more than 1 year in jail (6 months BAC). A mandatory fine of not less than $500 or more than $1,000 and 1 year revocation of driver's license and/or driving privilege and completion of an alcohol course and treatment. In addition the vehicle used owned and operated at time of offense is seized and subject to forfeiture by the arresting agency.

4th offense (felony) – 6 months to 13 months jail and fine not less than $1,000 or more than $10,000. Driver's license revoked 1 year.

*SCREENING FOR ALCOHOL

Montana law allows for a Peace Officer, as a part of their screening for determining an impaired driver to ask for a PRELIMINARY ALCOHOL SCREENING TEST, and in addition any person who operates a motor vehicle on the ways of this state open to the public shall be deemed to have given consent to a chemical test of their blood or breath for the purpose of determining the alcoholic content of their blood if arrested by a peace officer for driving or being in actual physical control of a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol. If you refuse to submit to either the preliminary screening or regular test, the Peace Officer will seize your driver's license, issue you a suspension or revocation notice and a temporary driving permit that will be valid for 5 days.

On first refusal, your driver's license is suspended for 6 months first offense, 1 year revocation second or subsequent offence within 5 years with no provision for a probationary license.

*MINOR IN POSSESSION

Under 18	
1st offense	Fine not to exceed $100–Drivers license confiscated 300-120 days by court Community service and substance abuse course if available
2nd offense	Fine not to exceed $200–Drivers license suspended 60-120 days–Community service and substance abuse course if available
3rd offense	Fined $300-500–Drivers license suspended 120 days-1 year. If driving, revoked 1 year or until age 18 whichever is last.–Community service and substance abuse course if available
Age 18-20	
1st offense	Fine not to exceed $50–Community service if available
2nd offense	Fine not to exceed $100–Drivers license suspended not more than 60 days if driving Community service if available
3rd offense	Fine not to exceed $200–Community service if available–Complete alcohol treatment course–Discretion of court, jail not to exceed 6 months

*MINOR UNDER AGE 21 WITH AN ALCOHOL CONCENTRATION OF .02 OR GREATER

1st offense	Fine not less than $100 or more than $500–License suspended 90 days.
2nd offense	Fine not less than $200 or more than $500–Incarceration no more than 10 days if 18 or older–License suspended 6 months
3rd or subsequent offense	Fine not less than $300 or more than $500– Incarceration 24-hours to 60 days if 18 or older–License suspended for 1 year

In addition, a person convicted of a minor .02 or greater must pay a $100 reinstatement fee and comply with alcohol treatment program.

DRIVING RECORDS

All convictions for traffic offenses, and/or offenses that require suspension or revocation of a license to drive are made a part of your driving record. A conviction obtained in another state will be made a part of your Montana record. A CERTIFIED DRIVING RECORD (CDR) may be obtained from the Motor Vehicle Division in Helena for a fee of $10.00, and contains a lifetime history. A MOTOR VEHICLE REPORT (MVR) is a three year history that costs $4.00 and may be obtained from your nearest driver examiner or the Motor Vehicle Division in Helena.

Your driving record is used by the State and insurance company to establish how safe a driver you are.

REPORT A DRUNK DRIVER 1-800-525-5555

BEFORE YOU DRIVE

It is up to you to decide if you are physically or mentally capable of driving safely. Before you drive, make sure that your trip is needed. If you drive, your safety and that of the public, depends a lot on what you do before driving, including adjusting your seat and mirrors, using safety belts, checking your vehicle, maintaining a clear view, and securing the vehicle.

Trip Planning

The cost of driving is not going down. There are ways you can help reduce your driving costs. First, determine your overall transportation needs. For each trip determine if it is necessary. If so, there may be times you do not need to drive yourself. You might ride with someone else, or you could take public transportation if it is available.

The best way to prolong the life of your car and save on fuel is to use it as little as possible. Trip planning can make your life easier, and help cut down on your driving.

- Take public transportation when it is available.
- Avoid driving during heavy traffic. It causes extra wear and tear on you and the vehicle.
- Use car pools or share rides whenever possible.
- Plan and then combine your trips. Make a list of the things you need and the places you need to go. Go to as many places as possible on any one trip. Take the shortest distance between places. Try to reduce the number of places you need to go. This will cut down on the number of trips you need to take.
- Call ahead to make sure that they have what you need or that what you are picking up is ready.

By doing these things you can help cut down on the amount of traffic on the road, cut your travel costs, and save yourself time and effort.

Check The Vehicle

How safely you can drive starts with the vehicle you are driving, and how good of shape it is in. It is the duty of drivers to make certain that the vehicles they drive are safe to operate. A vehicle that is in bad shape is unsafe and costs more to run than one that is maintained. It can break down or cause a collision. If a vehicle is in good shape it can give you an extra safety margin when you need it, and, you never know when you will need it.

You should follow your vehicle owners manual for routine maintenance. Some you can do yourself, some needs to be done by a qualified mechanic.

A few simple checks will prevent trouble on the road.

Braking System – Only your brakes can stop your vehicle. It is very dangerous if they are not working properly. If they do not seem to be working properly, are making a lot of noise, smell funny, the brake pedal goes to the floor, then have a mechanic check them.

Lights – Make sure that turn signals, brake lights, tail lights, and head lights are operating properly. These should be checked from outside the vehicle. Brake lights tell other road users that you are stopping, and turn signals tell them you are turning.

An out-of-line headlight can shine where it does not help you and may blind other drivers. If you are having trouble seeing at night, or other drivers are flashing their headlights at you constantly, have a mechanic check the headlights.

Windshield And Wipers – Damaged glass can more easily break in a minor collision or when something hits the windshield. Have the windshield replaced.

Windshield wipers keep the rain and snow off the windshield. Make sure they are in good operating condition. If the blades have not been working well, replace them.

Tires – Worn or bald tires can increase your stopping distance and make turning more difficult when the road is wet. Unbalanced tires and low pressure cause faster tire wear, reduce fuel economy, and make the vehicle harder to steer and stop. If the vehicle bounces, or the steering wheel shakes, or the vehicle pulls to one side, have a mechanic check it.

Worn tires can cause "hydroplaning", and increase the chance of having a flat tire during a trip. Check tire air pressure with an air pressure gauge when the tires are cold. Check the vehicle owner's manual for the proper pressure.

Check tread with a penny. Stick the penny into the tread "head" first. If the tread does not come at least to Abe's head, the tire is unsafe. You need to replace it.

Steering System – If the steering is not working properly, it is difficult to control the direction you want to go. If the vehicle is hard to turn or does not turn when the steering wheel is first turned, have the steering checked by a mechanic.

Suspension Sgstem – Your suspension helps you control your vehicle and provides a comfortable ride over varying road surfaces. If the vehicle bounces a lot, keeps bouncing after a bump, or after you stop, you may need new shocks or other suspension parts. Have a mechanic check it out.

Exhoust System – The exhaust system helps remove toxic gases from the engine, helps reduce the noise from the engine, and helps cool the hot gases coming from running the engine. Fumes from a leaky exhaust can cause death in a very short time. Never run the motor in your garage, or sit in the car with the motor running without opening a window.

Luckily, most exhaust problems are leaks which are easily heard, have them fixed.

Engine – A poorly tuned engine may lose power that is needed for normal driving and emergencies, may not start, gets poor fuel economy, pollutes the air, and could die on you when you are on the road causing you and traffic a problem. Follow the procedures recommended in the owner's manual for maintenance.

Loose Objects – Make sure that there are no packages or other objects on the rear-shelf or back seat that could hit someone on the head in the event of a sudden stop or crash. Make sure there are no objects on the floor that could roll under the brake pedal so that you could not stop the vehicle.

Horn – The horn may not seem like it would be important for safety, but as a warning device, it could save your life. It only should be used as a warning to others.

Motor Vehicle Equipment

Montana's laws require that certain equipment be installed on all motor vehicles, and that certain vehicles such as larger trucks and trailers have lighting and other equipment not needed on passenger cars. This is an attempt to outline all of these equipment requirements in an understandable manner. To this end you will find listed below all of the equipment which is required on EVERY vehicle followed by a listing for each type of vehicle which requires special or additional equipment.

When the law has indicated a level of performance for the equipment (the distance lights must be visible, etc.) that level has been indicated. For the more detailed information on such things as the location on the vehicle or specific installation requirements, a reference to Title 61 Chapter 9 of the laws of Montana has been provided for your convenience. Generally, a copy of the Montana laws is available for reference in each county courthouse and most libraries.

Head Lamps. (61-9-221) Capable of illuminating persons or vehicles for a distance of 350 feet on high beam and 100 feet on low beam. High beam must be dimmed when meeting other vehicles at 1000 feet and when overtaking other vehicles at 300 feet. Headlamps are required to be in use at all times from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise and at any time when visibility due to weather, blowing dust, etc., is less than 500 feet.

Toil Lamps. (61-9-204) (Vehicles manufactured after January 1, 1956) Must emit a red light visible for 500 feet.

Signal Lomps. (61-9-208) (Vehicles manufactured after January 1, 1956) Must emit white or amber light to the front and red or amber light to the rear, visible for 100 feet in the sunlight. A motor vehicle must be equipped with signal lamps when the distance from the center of the steering post to the vehicle's left outside limit is more than 24 inches or when the distance from the steering post to the rear limit of the vehicle or load is more than 14 feet.

Stop Lamps. (61-9-206) (Vehicles manufactured after January 1, 1956) Must emit red or amber light visible for 100 feet in sunlight.

License Plate Lomp. (61-9-204) (Vehicles manufactured after January 1,1956) Must emit white light to illuminate license plate for 50 foot visibility, to the rear.

Red Reflectors (reor). (61-9-205) Must be visible at night when in front of high beam headlights for all distances between 50 and 300 feet.

Muffler. (61-9-403) Must prevent excessive or unusual noise.

Mirror. (61-9-404) (Vehicles manufactured after January 1, 1956) Must provide 200 foot visibility to the rear of the vehicle.

Brokes and Parking Brokes. (61-9-301 et al) Must control the movement of and stop and hold the vehicle under all conditions of loading and on any grade incident to its operation.

Horn. (61-9-401) Must provide warning audible for 200 feet.

Sofety Glass. (61-9-405, 61-9-408) (Vehicles manufactured after January 1, 1956) Must be designed so as to reduce the likelihood of injury by shattering into small pieces instead of breaking into shards. Additionally, no materials may be attached to or replace such glass which would restrict the view of the driver.

Window Tinting ond Sunscreening. (61-9-428) Montana law applies strict standards for tinting and sunscreening. You may want to check with you local examiner, county treasurer, or any law enforcement officer.

Height. (61-10-103) A vehicle, unladen or with load, may not exceed a height of 14 feet.

Windshield Wipers. (61-9-405) Must be maintained in a condition which will keep the windshield clear.

Parking Lamps. (61-9-214) During the time headlamps are required, any vehicle which is parked or stopped on a roadway must be equipped with and display parking lights which must display a white or amber light to the front and a red light to the rear, visible for a distance of 500 feet.

Additional Equipment Required on Certain Vehicles

Clearance Lamps ond Side Morker Lomps. (61-9-208, 61-9-209, 61-9-210) If over 80 inches in width every bus or truck, and every trailer or semi trailer in excess of 3000 pounds GVW, must have on the front and rear two clearance lamps, 1 at each side.

Every truck tractor must have on the front 2 clearance lamps, 1 at each side.

Every pole trailer in excess of 3000 pounds GVW, shall have on each side 1 clearance light.

Any vehicle manufactured after January 1, 1956 shall be equipped with 2 tail lamps mounted of the rear, except motorcycles, motor driven cycles, quadri cycles and truck tractors.

Clearance lamps on the front or side of the vehicle shall display an amber light, and clearance lamps mounted on the rear of the vehicle shall display a red light. All clearance lamps shall be visible for 500 feet when required.

Reflectors. (61-9-208, 61-9-209, 61-9-210) Every vehicle, whatever its size, must have on the rear, two reflectors and a stop light, in addition to the clearance lamps required, have reflectors with, or in combination with, clearance lamps which shall reflect the same color as the required clearance lamp. Required reflectors shall be visible at all distances between 600 feet through 100 feet from the vehicle when illuminated by upper beam headlamps. Every truck, bus, whatever its size, must be equipped with two clearance lights, reflectors, and a stop light.

Projecting Load Lamp or Flag. (61-9-213) Whenever any load extends 4 feet or more beyond the body of the vehicle there shall be, during the time headlamps are required, a red light visible for 500 feet attached to the extreme rear end of the load. At all other times there shall be a red flag not less that 12 inches square.

Special Lighting for Farm Troctors and Implements of Husbandry. (61-9-215) During the time headlamps are required, any farm tractor or implement of husbandry moved on the highway must display a white light to the front visible for at least 500 feet and a red light to the rear visible for 500 feet. These lamps shall be mounted so as to indicate the extreme left projection of the vehicle.

Spot Lamps ond Auxiliory Lamps (Fog Lamps). (61-9-217) Any vehicle may be equipped with (not to exceed 2) spot and/or auxiliary (fog) lamps. Spot lamps must be turned off when approaching another moving vehicle from either direction and fog lamps may be used with lower headlamp beams if they do not project a beam stronger than the low beam headlamp.

Additional Brake Requirements. (61-9-304 through 61-9-315) Every trailer, semi trailer and pole trailer equipped with air or vacuum brakes or which has a gross weight in excess of 3000 pounds must have "breakaway" brakes which are activated if the vehicle is separated from the towing vehicle.

Maintenonce of Brokes. (61-9-313) All brakes shall be maintained in good working order and shall be adjusted to operate on all wheels equally.

Certain Warning Devices Prohibited. (61-9-401) No vehicle shall be equipped with nor shall any person use upon a vehicle any siren, whistle or bell except as permitted for authorized emergency vehicles.

Driver Response to Emergency Vehicle Signals. (61-9-402) When a police vehicle, authorized emergency vehicle and emergency service vehicle are operating emergency signal equipment as follows: police vehicle-siren and/or red or blue flashing or rotating lights: authorized emergency vehicle-siren and/or flashing or rotating red lights; and police vehicles, emergency vehicles and emergency service vehicles flashing or rotating amber lights, the drivers of other vehicles have the obligation to yield right-of-way and/or stop and if the vehicle displaying the emergency signal is stopped, to proceed past such signal or light only with caution and at a speed which is no greater than is reasonable and proper under the conditions existing at the point of operation.

Mud Flops Required. (61-9-407) Trucks, buses, truck trailers, trailers/semi trailers, or pole trailers, must have on the rear most wheels or set of wheels fenders, splash aprons, or flaps as follows:

Vehicles of 8000 pounds or less GVW- such fenders, splash aprons or flaps shall extend down to a point not more than 20 inches above the surface of the highway when the vehicle is empty.

Safety Chains. (61-9-208) Every trailer, semi trailer or pole trailer of 3000 pounds GVW or less must have on the front a steel chain or cable which shall be fastened securely to the towing unit. Such chain or cable shall be no less than 1/4 inch in diameter.

Certain Vehicles to Carry Flares or Other Warning Devices. (61-9-411) Every truck of one ton capacity or larger, passenger bus and truck tractor must be equipped with at least three flares, or three red electric lanterns, or three portable red reflectors. All must be capable of being seen at a distance of not less than 600 feet under normal atmospheric conditions at night. Reflectors used must display a minimum of 24 square inches of reflective surface and at least three red fusees (if red reflectors or red lanterns are not carried) and two red cloth flags at least 12 inches square with standards to support and display such flags.

NOTE: Vehicles transporting explosives, flammable liquids or compressed gases or using compressed gases as fuel may not carry any warning device which produces a signal by flame.

As an alternative to the equipment required above, three emergency reflective triangles conforming with U.S.D.O.T. Motor Vehicles Safety Standard 125 may be carried.

Displag of Warning Devices when Vehicles Disabled. (61-9-412) Whenever any truck, passenger bus, tractor, trailer, semi-trailer or pole trailer is disabled on the highway or shoulder of the highway when lighted lamps are required, the following warning devices shall be displayed:

A warning device as previously described shall be immediately placed at the traffic side of the vehicle in the direction of approaching traffic. Then place warning devices as follows: one 100 feet (200 feet if divided highway) in back of the vehicle in the center of the lane occupied by the vehicle, one 100 feet in front of the vehicle (same direction if divided highway) and in the center of the same lane, and one at the traffic side of the vehicle not less than 10 feet in the direction of nearest approaching traffic.

Whenever any of the above vehicles is disabled within 500 feet of a curve, hill or other obstruction to view, the warning signal in that direction shall be placed no less than 500 feet from the vehicle and so as to afford ample warning to approaching traffic.

Whenever any of the above vehicles is disabled on a roadway when the above warning devices are not required, the driver shall display 2 red flags in the lane occupied by the disabled vehicle or at a distance of 100 feet to the front and to the rear of the vehicle.

Whenever any motor vehicle transporting explosives, flammable liquid or compressed gas, or any vehicle using compressed gas as fuel, is disabled at any time or place mentioned above, the driver shall immediately display one red electric lantern or portable red emergency reflector at the traffic side of the vehicle and 2 red electric lanterns or portable red reflectors, one 100 feet to the front and one 100 feet to the rear of the vehicle in the center of the traffic lane occupied by the disabled vehicle.

Flares, fuses or signals produced by flame shall NOT be used as warning devices.

Slow-Moving Vehicles. (61-9-415) Any slow moving vehicle or equipment, animal-drawn vehicle, or road construction or maintenance machinery normally operating at or under 25 miles per hour, must display an emblem on the rear of such vehicles as described below, except for road construction or maintenance machinery engaged in actual construction or maintenance work and guarded by a flagman or warning signs.

Slow Moving Vehicle Sign

The emblem shall be a triangle of fluorescent yellow-orange color with a base of 14" and 14" in height. The triangle shall have a border with reflective red stripes one and three-quarters inches wide and shall be mounted in the center of the rear of the vehicle at a height 3 to 5 feet above the roadway.

On a two-lane highway when the slow-moving vehicle does not leave a clear lane for overtaking and passing vehicles, the slow-moving vehicle shall, at the first safe opportunity with sufficient room for turnout, pull over to allow the vehicles to pass.

Clean Glass Surfaces

It is important that you are able to see clearly through the windows, windshield, and mirrors. Here are some things you can do to help you.

- Keep the windshield clean. Bright sun or headlights on a dirty windshield make it hard to see. Carry liquid cleaner and a paper or cloth towel so you can clean your windshield whenever it is necessary.
- Keep your window washer bottle full. Use antifreeze wash in areas where the temperature could fall below freezing.
- Keep the inside o your windows clean, especially if anyone has been smoking in the vehicle. Smoking causes a film to build up on the inside glass.
- Clear snow, ice, or frost from *all windows*. Clean the front, sides and back before you drive.
- Do not hang things from your mirror or clutter up the windshield with decals. They could block your view.
- Keep the headlights, backup, brake, and taillights clean. Dirt on the lenses can cut the light's effectiveness by 50%.

Adjust Seat and Mirrors

You should always check your seat and mirrors before you start to drive. Many vehicles have multiple drivers who are different sizes.

- Adjust your seat so that you are high enough to clearly see the road. If necessary, use a seat cushion. Do not move the seat so far forward that you cannot easily steer.
- Adjust your rear view mirror and side mirrors. You should be able to see out the back window with the rear view mirror, and to the sides with the side mirrors. A good adjustment for the side mirrors is to set them so that when you lean forward slightly, you can see the side of your vehicle.
- If you have a day/night mirror, make sure it is set for when you are driving.
- Head restraints are designed to prevent whip-lash if you are hit from behind. They should be adjusted so the head restraint contacts the back of the head.

Use Safety Belts And Child Restraints

Before you drive away, always fasten your safety belts and make sure all your passengers are using safety belts or child restraints. Also remember to lock the vehicle's doors.

It is important that you and your passengers use safety belts. Studies have shown that if you are in an accident, using safety belts, your chances of being hurt or killed are greatly reduced. In Montana, it is illegal to drive, or to be a front-seat passenger, without wearing safety belts. You should wear your seatbelt at all times.

"NO DRIVER may operate a motor vehicle upon a highway of the state of Montana unless EACH OCCUPANT of a designated seating position is wearing a properly adjusted and fastened seat belt. A driver who violates the law will be fined $20.00."

These are exceptions to the statement above:

- If the vehicle was manufactured prior to January 1, 1968
- If an occupant POSSESSES a written statement from a licensed physician that he/she is unable to wear a seat belt for medical reasons.
- If you are an operator of a vehicle licensed as special mobile equipment (vehicle not designated or used primarily for the transportation of persons or property and incidentally operated or moved over the highways, including farm tractors, road construction or maintenance machinery, ditch digging apparatus, concrete mixers and other such vehicles which are within the general terms of Section 61-1-104 MCA).
- If they are children under the age of 2 who MUST be in an approved child restraint system, and if they are between 2 and 4 who MUST be properly restrained in an approved child restraint system or seat belt.
- If you are a person who makes frequent stops with a motor vehicle in your official job duties, and who may be exempted by the Department of Justice. The Department has adopted rules to provide for this exemption.

If your vehicle has a two-part safety belt system, be sure to wear both the lap-belt and shoulder-belt. Wearing either part alone greatly reduces your protection. If you have an automatic shoulder belt, be sure to buckle your lap belt as well. Otherwise, in a collision you could slide out of the belt and be hurt or killed.

Air bags are only PART of a total occupant protection system. Children in the front seat of an air bag equipped car should be secured in a child safety or booster seat or by the car's lap belt. This will hold them in place for air bag protection in a frontal crash, while protecting them against side, rear and roll-over collisions. Whenever possible, children riding in air bag equipped vehicles should be secured in passenger rear seat.

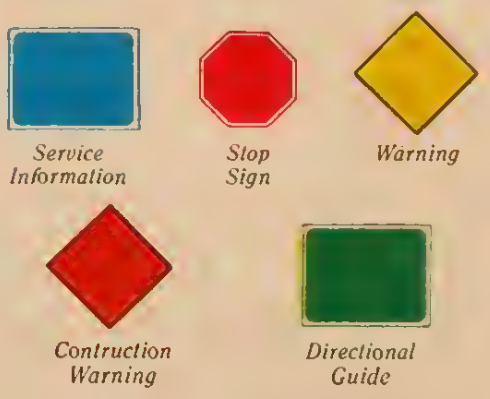
RULES OF THE ROAD

The Language of the Road

The language of the road is spoken in signs, signals and pavement markings. It's language you must know well if you are to drive safely.

In recent years, traffic signs throughout the United States have taken on a new look. In many cases, symbols and pictorial silhouettes have replaced words. They provide instant communication for those who might have trouble reading or those who speak another language. It is important to know their shapes and colors.

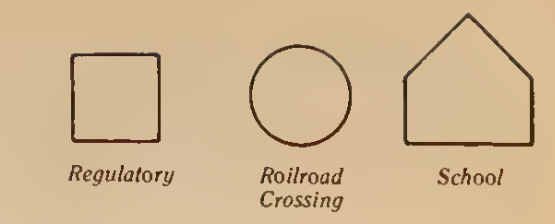
KNOW THESE SIGNS BY THEIR COLOR.



Service Information — *Stop Sign* — *Warning* — *Contruction Warning* — *Directional Guide*

KNOW THESE SIGNS BY THEIR SHAPES.

Stop — *Warning* — *Yield Right of Way*



Regulatory — *Railroad Crossing* — *School*

No Passing Zone — *Slow Moving Vehicle* — *Highway Markers*

These pages do not show every possible sign you might see on the road, but they do present a representative sampling. If you understand these, you should have no trouble understanding any others.

The same is true for electronic traffic signals and pavement markings. They will be used more to direct traffic, as our society becomes more and more urbanized.

Signs, Signals and Road Markings

The United States is moving toward an international-type system of traffic control devices, which emphasize picture and symbolic signs rather than written messages.

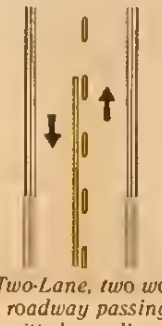
Illustrated on the next few pages you will find these new signs along with their counterparts, some of which will be in use for some time. Changes to the new signing are being made only when the old style signs are replaced due to repairs or maintenance.

A thorough knowledge of traffic signs, signals and road markings is necessary for all drivers. You must be able to recognize and obey these Signs of Life without hesitation.

Signs, signals and road markings are placed on our highways to inform, warn and regulate drivers. They must be obeyed; violators may be arrested. The types of traffic signs are classified according to function.

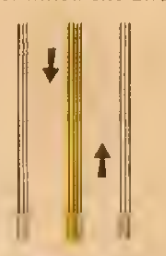
They are regulatory, warning and information guide signs.

Two-Lone, two-way roodway passing permitted.



Two-Lane, two woy roadway passing permitted one direction.

Two-lone, two-way roodwoy possing prohibited both directions, crossing centerline permitted only as part of left turn moneuver.



Road Markings...The broken yellow line is the center line. Don't cross the center line unless overtaking and passing. A solid yellow line on your side means that you cannot cross the center line at any time. A double yellow line may not be crossed. Heed other pavement markings such as pedestrian crosswalk strips, warning signs, etc.

The STOP sign is the only 8-sided troffic sign. It means thot you must come to a complete stop before entering the intersection oheod and yield to troffic close enough to be an immediate hazord. If there is o crosswolk, stop before entering it.

GUIDE—These informotionol traffic signs signify thot you are driving on o portion of the notionol highwoy system of Interstote ond Defense Highways, or on a U.S. or Stote Route.

YIELD—The Yield sign means slow down to 15 mph ond yield the right-of-way to all vehicles on the roadwoy being entered.

The MERGING TRAFFIC sign informs you thot you will be merging with other traffic traveling in the some direction. Rules governing the "changing of lones" opply here with the driver on the main route hoving the right-of-woy. Those entering must make use of speed-change lanes to merge with the main traffic flow smoothly ond sofely.

REGULATORY SIGNS REGULATE THE MOVEMENT OF TRAFFIC

*The road ahead is a one-way roadway, or all vehicular traffic is prohibited. **Do Not Enter.***

You must not pass any other vehicles going in the same direction as you are, while you are in this area.

You are approaching an area where a reduced speed limit has been established.

You must not make a left turn at this intersection.

Traffic is required to keep to the right of obstruction.

Since visibility is limited at night, your speed will be limited also.

When you have passed this sign you are again permitted to pass other vehicles with care.

You cannot turn about to go in the opposite direction at this intersection.

Construction and Maintenance Devices

Various traffic control devices are used in construction and maintenance work areas to direct drivers or pedestrians safely through the work zone and to provide for the safety of the highway workers.

The most commonly used traffic control devices are signs, barricades, drums, cones, tubes, flashing arrow panels and flagpersons. Orange is the basic color for these devices.

Construction and Maintenance Signs:

Construction and maintenance signs are used to notify drivers of unusual or potentially dangerous conditions in or near work areas. Most signs in work areas are diamond shaped. A few signs are rectangular.

It is a violation to exceed the posted speed in construction and work zones. The fines for violation of a work zone is double the amount. In addition, a person who knowingly or negligently drives a motor vehicle in a highway construction zone in such a manner as to endanger persons or property, or if a person purposely removes, ignores or intentionally strikes a traffic control device, is guilty of a misdemeanor and the penalty is the same as reckless driving.

Channelizing Devices:

Barricades, vertical panels, drums, cones and tubes are the most commonly used devices to alert drivers of unusual or potentially dangerous conditions in highway and street work areas and to guide drivers safely through the work zone. At night they are often equipped with flashing or steady burning lights.

BARRICADE

PANEL

CONE

TUBE

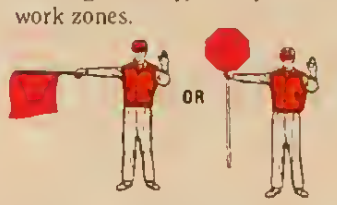
DRUM

BARRICADE

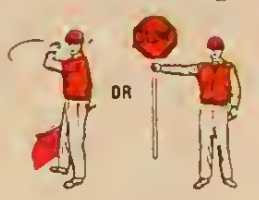
The diagonal stripes on the barricade or vertical panel guide the driver towards the direction to which traffic is to pass. Stripes sloping downward to the right mean the driver should bear to the right. Conversely, stripes sloping downward to the left mean bear to the left.

Flagpersons:

Flagpersons are often provided in highway and street work zones to stop, slow or guide traffic safely through the area. Flagpersons wear orange vests, shirts or jackets and use red flags or stop/slow paddles to direct traffic through work zones.



TRAFFIC STOP

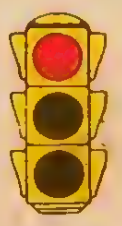


TRAFFIC PROCEED

Flashing Arrow Panels:

Large flashing or sequencing arrow panels may be used in work zones both day and night to guide drivers into certain traffic lanes and to inform them that part of the road or street ahead of them is closed.

Traffic Signals:

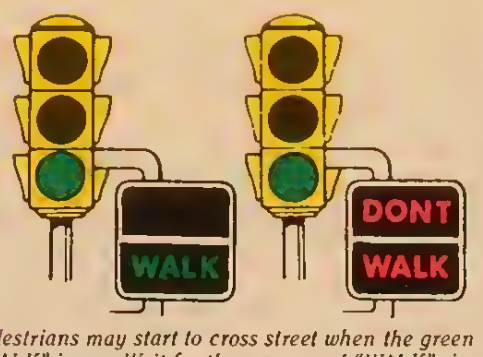


STOP . . . When light is red. Remain stopped until light turns green.

GO . . . When light is green "IF" you are certain the way is clear.

YELLOW . . . is to clear the intersection. It precedes RED and you must not enter or be in the intersection when red light comes on.

TURN . . . Only when the Green Arrow is on, and in the direction indicated. Use caution.



Pedestrians may start to cross street when the green "WALK" is on. Wait for the green, and "WALK" sign before starting to cross. The "DON"T WALK" sign for the pedestrian means don't start to cross and if you are already in the street proceed to the opposite curb.

The RED flasher means the same as a STOP sign.

The YELLOW LIGHT flashing or steady means to slow down and use caution.

Warning Signs:

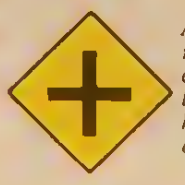
Warning signs are black and yellow. These signs are used to warn you of dangerous conditions ahead where you are required to drive with great caution. Warning signs are usually diamond shaped. However, the railroad crossing ahead sign, is round. It is the only round warning traffic sign.

Sharp turn to the right.

Sharp turn to the right then sharp turn to the left..

Gradual curve to the right then curve to the left.

Winding road ahead.



Another road crosses the hiyhway ahead.

Side road enters highway ahead from the right.

Side road enters highway ahead at an angle.

You can not go straight ahead. Road turns to both right and left.

The bridge ahead may be too narrow to meet or pass a truck. You must be careful.

This sign warns you that there is a school bus stop ahead. Approach with caution.

Where there are no fences cattle and horses may be on the highway. Be alert for them.

School ahead. Slow down and watch for children at all times.

There is not room on the bridge to meet or pass another car or truck.

The bridge ahead is narrower than the road you are on. However there is room for all vehicles except wide loads to meet and pass with caution.

A sign of this character is used whenever the road is icy and dangerous.

The road ahead is not as wide as the road you are on; however, there is room for all vehicles to meet and pass.

There is a railroad crossing ahead.

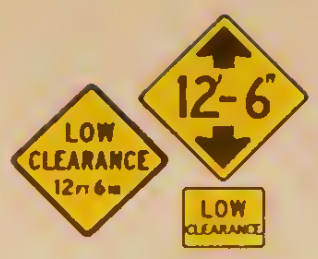
There is a STOP sign ahead.

A warning sign with an advisory speed sign attached advises you of the top safe speed at that particular point.

Deer habitually use this area for crossing the roadway. Be alert for them at all times.

School children cross the roadway at this point. You must stop if the crosswalk is occupied.

You are approaching a school crossing. Slow down and watch for children at all times.



You are approaching an overhead obstruction. Maximum height is indicated on the sign.

You are advised that the highway ahead changes to a divided highway. Keep to the right.

There is a pedestrian crossing ahead, slow down.

The roadway is slippery if it is wet. Go slow.

The road ahead goes downhill. Be careful. Trucks gear down.

You are advised that the highway ahead changes to an undivided highway. Be alert for two-way traffic.

A highway quite often splits a farm. This sign indicates a point where the stock are driven from one area to another.

The highway ahead is covered with loose gravel.

Our highways must be repaired and the repairmen must be protected. When this sign is observed approach with caution (35 mph maximum speed).

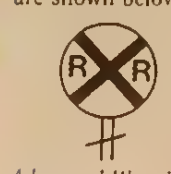
There are men working on the road ahead of you. Drive carefully (may be accompanied by restricted speeds).

Railroad Crossing Warning Signs – Many railroad crossings have signs or signals to warn drivers. Never try to beat a train across the tracks. Stop if there is any question about safety. Never start to cross until there is room for your vehicle on the far side. It is wise not to shift gears when crossing railroad tracks, just in case you might stall.

Public railroad grade crossings have been marked with warning devices for your safety by both highway departments and the railroad companies. Learn what they are and watch for them. With these warning devices and caution on your part, railroad grade crossing crashes should never happen.

- You are required to STOP at railroad crossings not more than 50 feet or less than 15 feet from the nearest rail when warning signals, crossing gates, stop signs, or human watchman indicate the approach of a train, or when the train is within 1500 feet of the crossing or is clearly visible and an obvious hazard.
- **Advance warning signs** are located in advance of the crossings. They tell you to slow down, look, listen and be prepared to stop at the crossing ahead.
- **Pavement Markings**, consisting of a Stop Line, an X and letters RR, may be painted on the pavement in front of crossings. This warns you to be alert to the crossing ahead.
- **Railroad crossbuck signs** will be found at all public crossings. If there is more than one track, a sign below the crossbuck indicates the number of tracks. Be prepared to stop at the tracks if a train is coming.
- **Flashing light signals** are used with crossbuck signs at many railroad crossings. Always stop when the lights begin to flash. This means that a train is coming. If there is more than one track, make sure all tracks are clear before starting to cross.
- **Gates** are used with flashing light signals at certain crossings. Stop when the lights begin to flash before the gates lower across your road lane. Remain stopped until the gates are raised and the lights stop flashing.

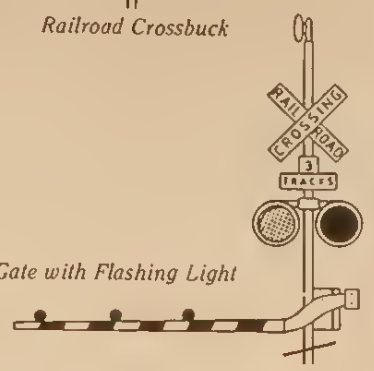
Some common railroad crossing warning signs and signals are shown below.



Advanced Warning

Railroad Crossbuck

Flashing Light



Gate with Flashing Light

Preventing grade crossing crashes is up to you!

Pavement Markings

Lines and symbols on the roadway divide lanes, tell you when you may pass other vehicles or change lanes, which lanes to use for turns, define pedestrian walkways, and where you must stop for signs or traffic signals.

Edge and Lane Lines. Solid lines along the side of the road show you where the edge of the road is located. Lines separating lanes of traffic moving in the same direction are white. Lines separating traffic moving in opposite directions are yellow.

- *White Lane Markings.* A dashed white line between lanes of traffic means that you may cross it to change lanes if it is safe to do so. A solid white line between lanes of traffic means that you should stay in your lane unless a special situation requires you to change lanes.
- *Crosswalks and Stop Lines.* When required to stop because of a sign or signal, you must stop before your vehicle reaches the stop line, or if there is one, a crosswalk. Crosswalks define the area where pedestrians are to cross the roadway. You must yield to pedestrians in or about to enter a crosswalk. Not all crosswalks are marked. Be alert for pedestrians when crossing intersections that do not have defined crosswalks.
- *Yellow Lane Markings.* A dashed yellow line between opposing lanes of traffic means that you may cross it to pass if it safe to do so. Some passing zones have signs that tell you where you can pass and where you cannot pass. Where there is both a solid and a dashed yellow line between opposing lanes of traffic, you may not pass if the solid yellow line is on your side. If the dashed line is on your side, you may pass if it is safe to do so. Two solid lines between opposing lanes of traffic means neither side can pass. You may cross a solid yellow line to turn into a drive way if it safe to do so.

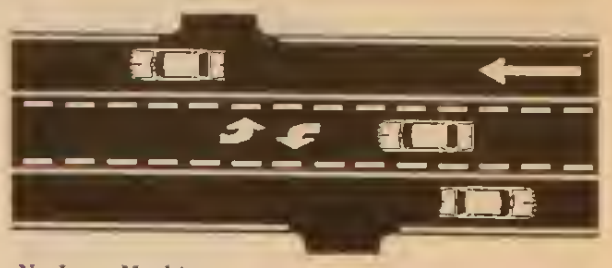
Other Lane Controls

Reversible Lanes. Some travel lanes are designed to carry traffic in one direction at certain times and in the opposite direction at other times. These lanes are usually marked by double-dashed yellow lines. Before you start driving in them, check to see which lanes you can use at that time. There may be signs posted by the side of the road or overhead. Sometimes special lights are used. A green arrow means you can use the lane beneath it; a red "X" means you may not. A flashing yellow "X" means the lane is only for turning. A steady "X" means that the use of the lane is changing and you should move out of it as soon as it is safe to do so.

Reserved Lanes. On various roadways, one or more lanes may be reserved for special vehicles. Reserved lanes are marked by signs stating that the lane is reserved for special use, and often have a white diamond posted at the side of the road or painted on the road surface.

- "Transit" or "bus" means the lane is for bus use only.
- "Bicycle" means the lane is reserved for bicycles.
- "HOV" stands for "High Occupancy Vehicles" and indicates lanes reserved for vehicles with more than one person in them. Signs say how many people must be in the vehicle, as well as the days and hours to which it applies. For example, "HOV 3" means there must be at least three people in the vehicle.

Shared Center Lane. These center lanes are reserved for making left turns (or U-turns when they are permitted) but can be used by vehicles traveling in both directions. On the pavement, left-turn arrows for traffic in one direction alternate with left-hand arrows for traffic coming from the other direction. These lanes are marked on each side by a solid yellow and dashed yellow lines.



No Lane Markings

When there are no signs or markings to control the use of lanes, there are rules that indicate which lane is to be used. These rules cover general driving, passing, and turning.

General Driving - Never back a vehicle in any travel lane. It is illegal and unsafe to do so. Drivers do not expect a vehicle to be backing towards them and may not realize it until it is too late. If you approach a turn in the wrong lane or have forgotten to signal you should proceed, get into the proper lane, go to the next intersection, signal, then turn.

Do not stop in travel lanes for any reason (confusion, breakdown, letting out a passenger). Keep moving until you can safely pull off the road.

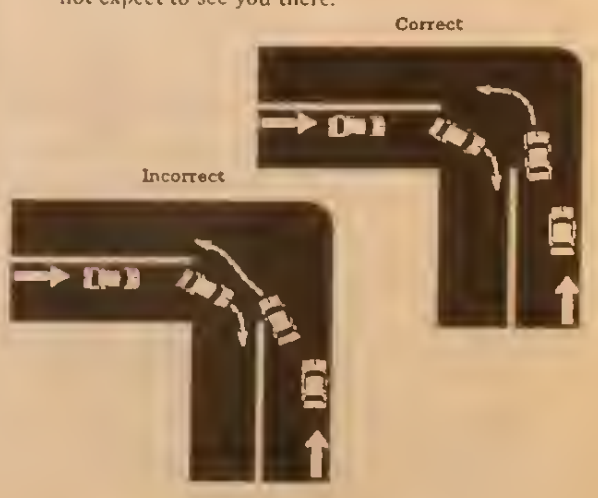
On a road with three or more lanes traveling in the same direction, stay in the right lane except to pass. If there is a lot of entering traffic, then use the center travel lane.

Unless told to do so, never drive on the shoulder of the road.

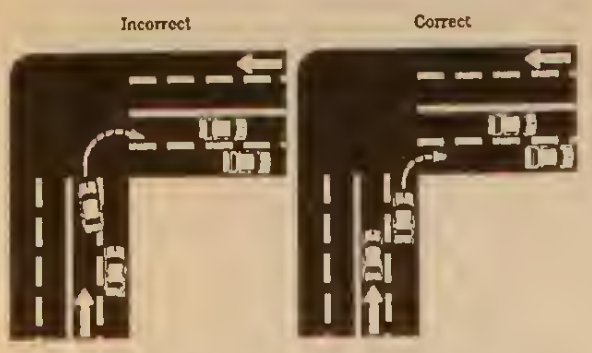
Passing - On two-lane roads it is permissible to drive a motor vehicle to the left of the centerline of a highway when overtaking and passing another vehicle. On multi-lane roads, the left-most lane is intended to be used to pass slower vehicles. If you pass on the right, the other driver may have difficulty seeing you and might suddenly change lanes in front of you. Never pass on the shoulder, whether it is paved or not. Other drivers will never expect you to be there and may pull off the road without looking.

Turning - Where there are no signs or lane markings to control turning, you should turn from the lane that is closest to the direction you want to go, and turn into the lane closest to the one you came from. This way, you will cross the fewest lanes of traffic. When making turns, go from one lane to the other as directly as possible without crossing lane lines or interfering with traffic. Once you have completed your turn, you can change to another lane if you need to.

- **Right Turns**. On right turns, avoid swinging wide to the left before turning to make the turn easier. If you swing wide, the driver behind you may think you are changing lanes or going to turn left and may try to pass you on the right. If you swing wide as you complete the turn, drivers who are in the far lane will not expect to see you there.



- **Left Turns.** When making a left turn, avoid cutting the corner so sharply that you run into someone approaching from the left. However, you must leave room for oncoming vehicles to turn left in front of you.



- **Turning around.** Common sense should tell us never to try turning around on a busy street or near a curve or hill. Turning around in any of these situations is not only illegal, it's dangerous. You may turn around on a roadway where the driver has 500 feet (almost 2 average city blocks) of unobstructed view and no vehicles are approaching. Remember that most city ordinances prohibit U-turns in the middle of a block and some prohibit U-turns entirely. *Above all, remember that no vehicle shall be turned at any time unless it is in the proper lane and it is safe to do so.*

Right-Of-Way

Where vehicles or pedestrians are likely to meet one another, and there are not signs or signals to regulate traffic, there are rules that say who must yield the right-of-way. These rules tell drivers who goes first and who must wait in different traffic situation.

The law says who must **yield** the right of way; it does not **give** anyone the right-of-way. You must do everything you can to prevent striking a pedestrian or another vehicle, regardless of the circumstances.

Pedestrians. To a driver, a pedestrian is a hazard – or should that be the other way around? In either case, drivers and pedestrians must share our roadways and each MUST be aware and alert for the other.

Obviously in any conflict between a vehicle and a pedestrian, the pedestrian is going to be the loser. This would seem to indicate that those on foot have the responsibility to stay out of trouble with vehicles. To a certain extent this is true. These laws are well and good, but it is still the driver's basic responsibility to be alert for pedestrians and to yield the right-of-way even if the pedestrian is wrong. Just as the fact that a stop sign does not cause a vehicle to stop if the driver ignores it, pedestrian laws don't keep people off the streets especially if they are young. Be alert at all times for pedestrians – especially in residential areas where children may be playing.

In addition to simple common sense, there are traffic laws and safety rules which govern pedestrians:

- Persons walking along the highway at night should wear light-colored clothing or carry a light.
- When sidewalks or paths are available, pedestrians may not walk on the roadway.
- When persons are walking on the roadway they must walk on the left (facing oncoming traffic).
- Pedestrians must cross streets at intersections, using crosswalks as provided.
- Pedestrians must obey all traffic laws and rules which apply to them.

Intersections. The following right-of-way rules apply at intersections:

- Drivers shall yield the right-of-way to pedestrians crossing in a crosswalk, but no pedestrian shall leave a curb and walk into the path of a vehicle. Drivers shall exercise care to avoid colliding with any pedestrian. Where sidewalks are provided, it shall be unlawful for pedestrians to walk on the roadway. Pedestrians must obey all traffic rules, signals, and signs which pertain to them.
- Drivers crossing a sidewalk, entering or exiting a driveway, alley, or parking lot must yield to pedestrians. It is illegal to drive on a sidewalk except to cross it.
- Pedestrians using a guide dog or carrying a white cane have absolute right-of-way. Do not use your horn as it could confuse or frighten the blind pedestrian.
- Drivers turning left must yield to oncoming cars going straight-ahead.
- Drivers entering a traffic circle or rotary must yield to drivers already in the circle.
- At an intersection where there is no stop sign or traffic signal, drivers must yield to vehicles coming from the right.
- At a 4-way stop, the driver reaching the intersection first gets to go first (after coming to a complete stop).
- Drivers entering a road from a driveway, alley or roadside must stop and yield to vehicles already on the main road.
- Drivers may not enter an intersection unless they can get through it without having to stop. You should wait until traffic ahead clears, so that you are not blocking the intersection
- A yield sign means you must slow to 15 miles per hour and yield right-of-way to all vehicles.
- At intersections controlled by a light, unless there is a sign which says you cannot turn right, you may turn right AFTER YOU HAVE STOPPED (if vehicle is in proper lane) and determined that it is safe to do so. Montana Law also permits turning left from a one-way street to a one-way street under the conditions stated above for turning right on red. When you reach a red light and wish to make a right turn and your car is in the left lane, drive to the next intersection, get into the proper lane, and then make the turn.

Overtaking Vehicles

Drivers overtaking a vehicle traveling in the same direction must yield to that vehicle, even if the vehicle is slowing or coming to a stop.

Emergency Vehicles

You must yield the right-of-way to a police vehicle, fire engine, ambulance, or other emergency vehicle using a siren or air horn, and a red or blue flashing light. Pull over to the right edge of the road, or as near to the right as possible, when you see or hear an emergency vehicle approaching from any direction. Follow any instructions given over the emergency vehicle's loudspeaker, also stop and remain stopped until the vehicle has passed. If you are in an intersection, drive through the intersection before you pull over and stop.

School Buses

Let's give our children a "brake". Every child is a human caution sign and as unpredictable as Montana's weather. The driver of a vehicle upon meeting or overtaking from either direction any school bus stopped with its red lights flashing shall stop before reaching the bus and shall not proceed until the red lights have been extinguished. If you approach a bus from either direction which is slowing down in preparation to stop to load passengers or a bus displaying a yellow flashing light, you must slow down and proceed carefully. Keep in mind that the bus is about to stop and children may be on the roadway. As a driver you do not need to stop if meeting or passing a school bus which is on a different roadway or the bus is stopped in an adjacent loading zone where pedestrians are not permitted to cross the roadway.

When driving past a school, you should slow down and watch for children DAY AND NIGHT. They go back to use the playground at all hours. Develop the habit of checking your speed when nearing any school. BE ALERT.

Funeral Procession

The state of Montana has some unique right-of-way provisions when driving in or encountering a funeral procession (MCA§ 61-8-380-384). A funeral procession, by state definition, means two or more motor vehicles, one of which is carrying the remains of a deceased person, in the daylight hours, including a funeral lead vehicle and a funeral escort vehicle (MCA§ 61-1-415).

State law requires that pedestrians and operators of motor vehicles not part of a funeral procession shall yield the right-of-way to a motor vehicle that is part of a funeral procession being led by a funeral lead vehicle or a funeral escort vehicle.

The driver of a vehicle that is not part of a funeral procession can not drive between the vehicles forming the procession while the procession is in motion unless the driver is authorized to do so by a police officer, or is driving an emergency vehicle. A driver may not join a funeral procession to secure the right-of-way that the procession enjoys, or pass a procession on a multiple-lane highway on the procession's right side unless the procession is in the farthest left lane.

In addition, the driver of a vehicle not part of a procession may not enter an intersection when a funeral procession is proceeding through a red traffic-control device unless that driver can do so without crossing the path of the funeral procession.

When the funeral lead vehicle arrives at an intersection, it must comply with the requirements of any official traffic-control device, right-of-way provision or local ordinance. At the point that the lead vehicle proceeds, others in the procession may follow through the intersection despite any official traffic-control device. However, the operator must exercise reasonable care toward any other vehicle or pedestrian.

When driving in a funeral procession, a driver must follow the preceding vehicle as closely as possible. An ordinance, law, or regulation requiring that motor vehicles be operated to allow sufficient space between them to enable another vehicle to enter and occupy that space without danger does not apply to vehicles in a funeral procession.

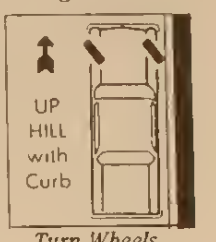
A driver in a funeral procession may not drive faster than 55 miles per hour on a highway where the speed limit is 55 miles per hour or more, nor more than 5 miles per hour below the posted speed limit on other streets or roads. All headlights and taillights must be illuminated. In addition, turn signals must be flashing simultaneous as warning lights on a vehicle that is the first vehicle in a funeral procession or the driver has reason to believe he is the last vehicle in a funeral procession.

A driver in a funeral procession must yield the right-of-way to an approaching authorized emergency vehicle giving an audible or visual signal.

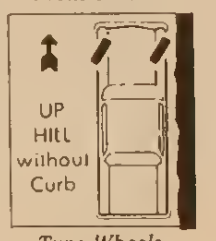
Remember, however, nothing in the state law relieves a driver from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highway.

Parking

Drivers are responsible for making sure that their vehicle does not become a hazard after it has been parked. Whenever you park your car, be sure it is in a place that is (1) far enough from any travel lane to avoid interfering with traffic and (2) visible to cars approaching from either direction.



Turn Wheels From Curb



Turn Wheels to Right

Turn Wheels To Curb

- Always park in a designated area if possible.
- Always set your parking brake when you park. Leave the vehicle in gear if it has a manual transmission, or in "park" if it has an automatic transmission.
- Check traffic before you open the door. Get out of the vehicle on the curb side if you can. If you have to use the street side, check traffic before you get out. Shut the door as soon as you can after getting out.
- Never leave the ignition keys in a parked car. Lock the doors whenever you leave your vehicle if it will be out of your sight at any time.
- If you must park on a roadway, park your vehicle as far away from traffic as possible. If there is a curb, park as close to it as you can.
- When you park on a hill, turn your wheels sharply towards the side of the road. This way, if your car starts to roll downhill, it will roll away from traffic.

No-Parking Zones -- There are many areas where you can not park. Check for signs that may prohibit or limit parking. Some parking restrictions are indicated by colored curb markings. Do not park:

- Within an intersection
- Within 20 feet of a crosswalk or sidewalk at an intersection
- In a construction area if your vehicle would block traffic
- Within 30 ft. of a traffic signal, stop sign, or yield sign
- Within 15 ft. of a fire hydrant
- Within 50 ft. of a railroad crossing
- More than 2 ft. from the curb
- Within 20 ft. of a fire station driveway on the same side of the street, or within 75 ft. of a driveway on the other side of the street
- Blocking a driveway, alley, private road, or area of the curb removed or lowered for access to the sidewalk
- On a bridge or elevated structure or in a tunnel or underpass
- On the wrong side of the street
- In a space marked for the handicapped, unless you have a handicap license plate, tag, or sticker.
- On the road side of a parked vehicle (double parking)
- On railroad tracks
- Wherever a sign says you cannot park

Vehicles parked on a roadway or shoulder during hours of darkness shall have lights front and rear visible for 500 feet. If headlights are on, they shall be dimmed.

SAFE DRIVING TIPS

No driver manual can teach you how to operate a vehicle or be a safe driver. Driving requires skill you can only gain through instruction and practice.

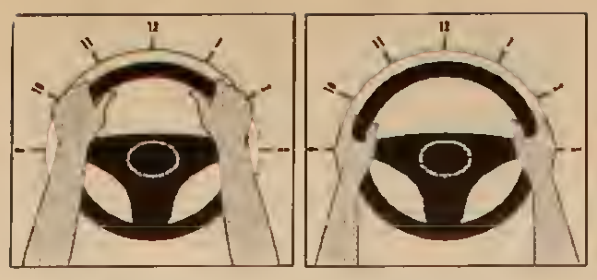
Basic Driving

Starting. Check the vehicle owner's manual for the best starting procedures for the vehicle. The procedures do vary depending on whether the vehicle has electronic ignition, and the type of transmission. Make sure the parking brake is on before you start the vehicle.

If the vehicle has a manual transmission, it must not be in gear, and in some vehicles, you must depress the clutch. For a vehicle that has an automatic transmission, you must put the shift selector in "park." The vehicle will not start otherwise.

Accelerating. Accelerate gradually and smoothly. Trying to start too fast can cause the drive wheels to spin, particularly on slippery surfaces, and cause the vehicle to slide. With a manual-shift vehicle, practice using the clutch and accelerator so that the engine does not over-rev or stall when shifting between gears.

Steering. Use a proper grip. Both hands should be placed on opposite sides of the steering wheel (e.g., at the 2 and 10 o'clock positions). This position is comfortable and on high speed roads, allows you to make turns without taking your hands off the wheel.



Look well down the road, not just at the road in front of your vehicle. Look for traffic situations where you will need to steer before you get to them. This way, you have time to steer smoothly and safely.

When turning corners, turn the steering wheel using the "hand-over-hand" technique. Do not turn the wheel with just the palm of one hand, you could lose control. When you complete a turn, straighten out the steering wheel by hand. Letting it slip through your fingers could be dangerous.

Controlling Speed. The best way to control your speed is to know how fast you are going. Check the speedometer often. People are not very good at judging how fast they are going. You may be going much faster than you think. This is especially true when you leave high speed roads and are driving on much slower local roads.

For your information you will find Montana's speed limits (which have been "designed" for the areas where posted) listed below:

1. 65 mph interstate speed limit for trucks during the day, 65 mph on interstate at night for all vehicles.
2. 25 mph in urban areas (unless posted otherwise)
3. Speed zones in high traffic or hazardous areas.
4. Passenger and light weight pickups, basic rule day speed limit.
5. Night limit 55 mph (secondary roads)

In addition to the posted speed limits, Montana law requires drivers to operate their vehicles "in a careful and prudent manner and at a rate of speed no greater than is reasonable and prudent at the point of operation, considering traffic, condition of the road, their vehicle, visibility ahead and so as to not unreasonably endanger the life, limb or property or other rights of any person entitled to the use of the street or highway."

Follow speed limit signs. They are there for your safety.

Stopping. Be alert so that you know when you will have to stop well ahead of time. Stopping suddenly is dangerous and usually points to a driver who was not paying attention. When you brake quickly, you could skid and lose control of your vehicle. You also make it harder for drivers behind you to stop without hitting you.

Try to avoid panic stops by seeing events well in advance. By slowing down or changing lanes, you may not have to stop at all, and if you do, it can be a more gradual and safer stop.

Seeing Well

Most of what you do in driving depends on what you see. To be a good driver, you need to see well. The single biggest contributor to accidents is failing to see what is happening. You must look down the road, to the sides and behind your vehicle, and be alert for unexpected events. At night and at other times when it's hard to see, you must use your headlights. For example, in many crashes with motorcycles, bicycles and pedestrians, drivers reported that they looked but did not see them.

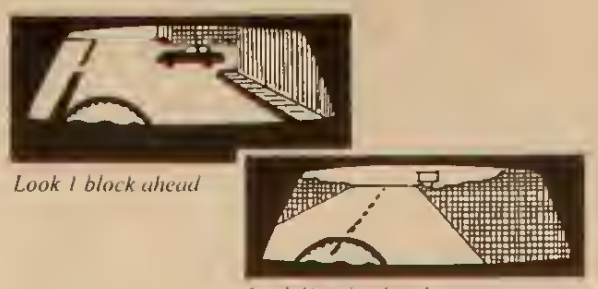
In order to see, drivers must be alert to what is going on around them. Many accidents occur because drivers do not pay enough attention to their driving. Do not take your eyes off the road for more than a few seconds at any one time. For example, if you need to look at a map, pull safely off the road before you try to look at. Do not try and read the map while you are driving.

If you have a cellular phone or 2-way radio, avoid using it when the vehicle is in motion. Even with "hands free" equipment, conversing on a phone or radio takes your attention away from driving and can cause you to be less likely to notice hazardous situations. Do not drive with head or earphones that cover or go in both ears. They make it too hard to hear emergency horns or sirens.

Do not rubberneck at crashes, someone getting a ticket, or other roadside activity. Rubbernecking could cause you to be in a crash. If you take your eyes off the road to look at something, you could run into a vehicle ahead that has slowed or stopped. Rubbernecking also can increase congestion. When you pass these roadside activities, keep your eyes on the road and get past them as soon and as safely as you can.

Scanning. To be a good driver, you must know what is happening around your vehicle. You must look ahead, to the sides, and behind the vehicle. Scanning helps you to see problems ahead, vehicles and people that may be in the road by the time you reach them, signs warning of problems ahead, and signs giving you directions.

- **Look Ahead.** In order to avoid last-minute braking or the need to turn, you should look down the road at least 10 seconds ahead of your vehicle. By looking well ahead and being ready to stop or change lanes if needed, you can drive more safely, save on fuel, help keep traffic moving at a steady pace, and allow yourself time to better see around your vehicle and along side the road. Looking well down the road will also help you to steer straighter with less weaving.



Look 1 block ahead

Look ¼ mile ahead

In the city, 10 seconds is about one block. When you drive in city traffic, you should try to look at least one block ahead. On the highway, 10 seconds is about four city blocks or a quarter of a mile.

How do you know how many seconds you are looking ahead? Here is how to figure if you are looking 10 seconds ahead.

1. Find a non-moving object like a sign or telephone pole near the road about as far ahead as you are looking.
2. Start counting: one-one-thousand, two-one-thousand, three-one-thousand, etc., until you reach the object.
3. The number of seconds you have counted is the number of seconds ahead that you were looking.

You can be a safer driver by looking well ahead. You can avoid the need to stop or turn quickly. The less you have to stop or turn quickly, the less likely you are to run into someone or have someone run into you.

By looking well ahead, you can save on fuel. Every time you have to stop quickly, it takes time and fuel to get your car back up to speed. Drivers who look ahead and can slow down gradually or change lanes can avoid unnecessary braking that leads to lower miles-per-gallon.

Traffic would flow more smoothly if everyone looked well ahead. Making driving changes before the last moment gives drivers behind you more time to react. The earlier you act, the less often someone behind you has to react quickly to your vehicle. By anticipating driving changes, you can drive more safely, and that helps drivers behind you drive more safely too. This also keeps traffic moving at a steady pace.

- **Look to the Sides.** As other vehicles or pedestrians may cross or enter your path anytime, you should look to the sides to make sure no one is coming. This is especially true at intersections and railroad crossings.
- **Intersections.** Intersections are any place where traffic merges or crosses. They include: cross streets, side streets, driveways, and shopping center or parking lot entrances. Before you enter an intersection, look both left and right for approaching vehicles and/or crossing pedestrians. If stopped, look both left and right just before you start moving. Look across the intersection before you start to move to make sure the path is clear through the intersection.

Before you turn left across oncoming traffic, look for a safe gap in oncoming traffic. Look to the street you are turning into to make sure that no vehicles or pedestrians are in your path, leaving you stranded in the path of oncoming traffic. Look one more time in the direction of oncoming traffic before you turn. Unless prohibited, you may turn left from a one-way street into another one-way street.

- Before turning right, make sure that there is no traffic approaching from your left and no oncoming traffic turning left into your path. Do not begin your turn without checking for pedestrians crossing where you will be turning. You may turn right on red unless prohibited.

Do not rely on traffic signals or signs that no one will be crossing in front of you. Some drivers do not obey traffic signals or signs. At an intersection, look left and right, even if other traffic has a red light or a stop sign. This is very important just after the light has turned green. This is when people on the cross street are most likely to run the red light in an attempt to get through before the light changes to red. Others who may not stop are individuals who have been drinking or other reckless drivers.

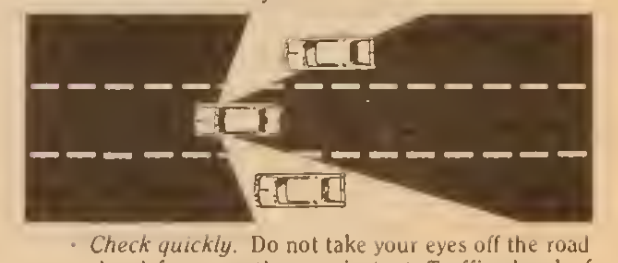
Make sure you can clearly see crossing traffic before entering an intersection. If you were stopped and your view of a cross street is blocked, edge forward slowly until you can see. By moving forward slowly, crossing drivers can see the front of your vehicle before you can see them. This gives them a chance to slow down and warn you if needed.

Whenever there is a lot of activity along the side of the road, there is a good chance that someone will cross or enter the road. Therefore, it is very important to look to the sides when you are near shopping centers and parking lots, construction areas, busy sidewalks, and playgrounds and school yards.

- **Railroad Crossings.** As you approach any railroad crossing, look up and down the tracks to make sure a train is not coming. Do not assume that a train is not coming even if you have never seen one at that crossing before. That is one of the leading causes of fatalities at railroad crossings.

At crossings with more than one track, wait until the passing train is well down the track before starting to cross. Another train could be coming. One that might have been hidden by the one that just passed.

- **Look Behind.** Besides watching traffic ahead of you, you must check traffic behind you. You need to check more often when traffic is heavy. This is the only way you will know if someone is following too closely or coming up too fast and will give you time to do something about it. It is very important to look behind for vehicles when you change lanes, slow down, back up, or are driving down a long or steep hill.
- **When Changing Lanes.** Whenever you want to change lanes, you must check that there are no vehicles in the lane you want to enter. This means you must check for traffic to the side and behind your vehicle before you change lanes. Changing lanes includes: changing from one lane to another, merging onto a roadway from an entrance ramp, and entering the roadway from the curb or shoulder. When changing lanes, you should:
  - *Look in your rearview and side mirrors.* Make sure there are no vehicles in the lane you want to enter. Make sure that nobody is about to pass you.
  - *Look over your shoulder* in the direction you plan to move. Be sure no one is near the rear corners of your vehicle. These areas are called "blind spots" because you cannot see them through your mirrors. You have to turn your head and look.



  - *Check quickly.* Do not take your eyes off the road ahead for more than an instant. Traffic ahead of you could stop suddenly while you are checking traffic to the sides, rear, or over your shoulder. Also, use your mirrors to check traffic while you are preparing to change lanes, merge, or pull onto the roadway. This way you can keep an eye on cars ahead of you at the same time. Check over your shoulder just before you change lanes for traffic in your blind spot. Look several times if you need to so as not to look for too long a period at any one time. You must keep track of what traffic is doing in front of you and in the lane you are entering.
  - *Check the far lane.* Be sure to check the far lane, if there is one, as someone in that lane may be planning to move into the same lane you want to enter.
  - *Check for other road users.* Remember that there are other road users such as motorcycles, bicycles, and pedestrians that are harder to see than are cars and trucks. You should always be cautious when passing a bicycle because the cyclist may have to swerve into traffic to avoid an object on the road. Be especially alert when you are entering the roadway from the curb or driveway.
- **When You Slow Down.** You must check behind your vehicle whenever you slow down. This is very important when you slow down quickly or at points where a following driver would not expect you to slow down, such as private driveways or parking spaces.
- **When Pulling Away From the Curb.** Signal, look over left shoulder and pull out when it is safe to do so.
- **When You Back Up.** It is hard for you to see behind your vehicle. Try to do as little backing as possible. In a shopping center, try to find a parking space you can drive through, so that you can drive forward when you leave. Where backing is necessary, here are some hints that will help you back your vehicle safely.
  - Check behind your vehicle before you get in. Children or small objects can not be seen from the driver's seat.
  - Place your right arm on the back of the seat and turn around so that you can look directly through the rear window. Do not depend on your rearview or side mirrors as you can not see directly behind your vehicle.
  - Back slowly, your vehicle is much harder to steer while you are backing.
  - Whenever possible use a person outside the vehicle to help you back.
- **When Going Down a Long or Steep Hill.** Check your mirrors when you are going down hills or mountains. Vehicles often build up speed going down a steep grade. Be alert for large trucks and buses that may be going too fast.

Night Driving

90% of driving decisions are based upon what we see. At night your vision is reduced, a drive cannot see as well at night, so SLOW DOWN. Night driving requires that you take into account not only the speed limit, but condition of road, car and weather. Anytime from a half hour after sunset and a half hour before sunrise, or anytime when, due to insufficient light conditions, persons or vehicles are not visible for 500 feet, you shall turn on your headlights.

Headlights on upper beam (bright) shall reveal persons and vehicles for 350 feet, and when on lower beam (dim) for 100 feet. At dusk or overcast days, you should turn on your headlights. Dim your lights within 1000 feet when meeting a vehicle and within 300 feet when following.

NEVER drive with your parking lights as oncoming drivers may think that you have stopped. A spot light may be used just as long as you turn it off when approaching a motor vehicle.

When meeting traffic at night, avoid looking directly at oncoming headlights. Instead, watch the right edge of the roadway and if an oncoming driver flicks his lights at you, check to be sure you have dimmed yours. The law not only requires dimming for approaching traffic, but it is courteous and safer to do so.

Although sunglasses are a big help during the daylight hours, they reduce your visibility dangerously at night. Even tinted and some "photo gray" lenses can detract up to 30 % of your night vision. Caution should be used by *all* wearers of tinted lenses.

If you have mechanical problems or a tire failure, be sure to slow down gently. Make no attempt to pull off the road until your vehicle is under control. Then, move to your right, out of the traffic lane as far as safely possible. If at night, be sure to leave your parking lights on and if your headlights are on, make sure that they are dimmed.

Avoid night driving for long distances. When you are fatigued, stop at least every 2 hours for a short break, open the window or cold air vent to allow fresh air to circulate throughout the car, sing or play the radio. If you become drowsy, pull off the road and take a nap, or better yet find a room for the night. It's better to arrive at your destination a few hours later than never to arrive at all.

Communicating

Accidents often happen because one driver does not see another driver, or when one driver does something the other driver does not expect. It is important that drivers let other road users know they are there, and what they plan to do.

Letting Others Know You Are There. Some drivers do not always pay attention to what is going on around them. It is important that other road users know that you are there.

Use Headlights. Besides helping you to see at night, headlights help other people see you. If needed, flick your headlights to alert other road users you are there. Remember to turn on your headlights whenever you have trouble seeing others. If you have trouble seeing them, they are having trouble seeing you.

- On rainy, snowy, or foggy days, it is sometimes hard for other drivers to see your vehicle. In these conditions, headlights make your vehicle easier to see. Remember, if you turn on your wipers, turn on your headlights.
- Turn on your headlights when it begins to get dark. If you turn them on a little early, you will help other drivers see you.
- Whenever driving and lights are necessary, use your headlights. Parking lights are for parked cars only.
- When driving away from a rising or setting sun, turn on your headlights. Drivers coming towards you may have trouble seeing your vehicle. Your headlights will help them see you.

Use Your Horn. People cannot see you unless they are looking your way. Your horn can get their attention. Use it whenever it will help prevent an accident. If there is no immediate danger, a light tap on the horn should be all you need. Give your horn a light tap:

- When a person on foot or on a bike appears to be moving into your lane of travel.
- When you are passing a driver who starts to turn into your lane.
- When there is a driver who is not paying attention or who may have trouble seeing you.
- When coming to a place where you cannot see what is ahead like a steep hill, a sharp curve, or exiting a narrow alley.

If there is danger, do not be afraid to sound a SHARP BLAST on your horn. Do this:

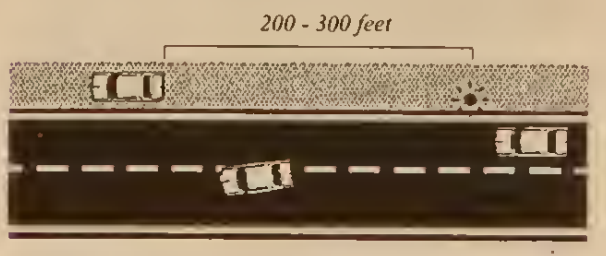
- When a child or older person is about to walk, run, or ride into the street
- When another car is in danger of hitting you
- When you have lost control of your vehicle and are moving towards someone.

When Not to Use Your Horn. There are several occasions when you should not use your horn. They include:

- To encourage someone to drive faster or get out of the way
- To apprise other drivers of an error
- To greet a friend
- Around blind pedestrians.

Use Emergencg Signals - If your vehicle breaks down on a highway, make sure that other drivers can see it. All too often accidents occur because a driver did not see a stalled vehicle until it was too late to stop. If available, use your 2-way radio or telephone to notify authorities that you or someone else has broken down. Many roadways have signs that tell you the CB channel or telephone number to call in an emergency. If you are having vehicle trouble, and have to stop;

- If at all possible, get your vehicle off the road away from traffic.
- Turn on your emergency flashers to show you are having trouble.
- If you cannot get your vehicle off the roadway, try to stop where other drivers have a clear view of your vehicle. Do not stop just over a hill or just around a curve.
- Try to warn other road users that your vehicle is there. Place emergency flares behind the vehicle. This allows other drivers to change lanes if necessary.



- If you do not have emergency flares or other warning devices, stand by the side of the road, where you are safe from traffic, and wave traffic around your vehicle. Use a white cloth if you have one.
- Never stand in the roadway. Do not even try to change a tire if it means you have to be in a traffic lane.
- Lift the hood, or tie a white cloth to the antenna, side mirror, or door handle to signal an emergency.

Stay Out of the Blind Spot. Drive your vehicle where others can see you. Do not drive in another vehicle's blind spot.

- Try to avoid driving on either side and slightly to the rear of another vehicle. Either speed up or drop back so the other driver can see your vehicle more easily.
- When passing another car, get through the other driver's blind spot as quickly as you can. The longer you stay there, the longer you are in danger of them turning into you.
- Never stay along side a large vehicle such as a truck or bus. These vehicles have large blind spots and it is hard for their drivers to see you.

Letting Others Know What You Are Doing

Generally, other drivers expect you to keep doing what you are doing. You must warn them when you are going to change direction or slow down, by vehicle position and eye contact. This will give them time to react, if needed, or at least not to be surprised by what you do.

Signal When You Change Direction. It gives other drivers time to react to your moves. You should use your turn signals before you: change lanes, turn right or left, merge into traffic, or park.

- Get into the habit of signaling every time you change direction. Signal even when you do not see anyone else around. It is easy to miss someone who needs to know what you are doing.
- **Left turns.** Well ahead of your turn, look for any following cars, give signal and move over close to the centerline.
  - Signal 100 feet (1/3 city block) and start slowing down.
  - Signal 300 feet for rural areas.
  - Look and yield right-of-way to oncoming traffic.
  - While waiting to complete turn, keep your wheels pointed straight ahead – if you are struck from behind, you will not be forced into oncoming traffic.
  - Enter street just to right of center – do not cut corners.
  - After completing turn, gradually move to the center of your lane and be sure that your signal has canceled.
- **Right turns.**
  - Right turns should be made as close as practical to the right edge of the curb or roadway.
  - Well in advance of your turn, get into the proper lane.
  - Signal your right turn for 100 feet (1/3 city block) (300 feet in rural areas) and slow down.
  - Keep as close to the right side as possible when completing a right turn.
  - Do not make a wide-sweeping turn or cross into the left lane.
- Be careful that you do not signal too early. If there are streets, driveways, or entrances between you and where you want to turn, wait until you have passed them to signal.
- If another vehicle is about to enter the street between you and where you plan to turn, wait until you have passed it to signal your turn. If you signal earlier, the other driver may think you plan to turn where they are and they might pull into your path.
- After you have made a turn or lane change, make sure your turn signal is off. After small turns, the signals may not turn off by themselves. Turn it off if it has not clicked off by itself. If you don't, other drivers might think you plan to turn again.

Signal When You Slow Down. Your brake lights let people know that you are slowing down. Always slow down as early as it is safe to do so. If you are going to stop or slow down at a place where another driver does not expect it, tap your brake pedal three or four times quickly to let those behind you know you are about to slow down.

Signal when you slow down:

- To turn off a roadway which does not have separate turn or exit lanes.
- To park or turn just before an intersection. Following traffic expects you to continue to the intersection.
- To avoid something in the road or stopped or slowing traffic that a driver behind you cannot see.

Adjusting Speed

The faster your vehicle is going, the more distance it will take to turn, slow, or stop. For example, stopping at 60 mph does not take twice the distance it takes at 30 mph as one might think, but over three times the distance. Driving safely means adjusting your speed road and traffic conditions and how well you can see, and obeying speed limits.

Adjusting To Road Conditions

There are various road conditions where to be safe you must slow down. You must slow down before a curve, when the roadway is slippery, and when there is standing water on the road.

The only contact your vehicle has with the road is through the tires. How good a grip the tires have with the road depends on the type and condition of the tires, and the type and condition of the road surface.

Many drivers do not pay enough attention to the condition of their tires or to the condition of the roadway. It is important that the tires be in good condition and have enough air in them. See the vehicle owner's manual for correct tire pressures.

You do not have as much traction on gravel and dirt roads as you do on concrete and asphalt roads. When driving on gravel or dirt, you must slow down. It will take you much longer to stop and it is much easier to skid when turning.

Curves - A vehicle can travel much faster in a straight line than it can in a curve. It is easy to go too fast in a curve. If you go too fast, then the tires will not be able to grip the road, and the vehicle will skid. Always slow down before you enter the curve so you do not have to brake in the curve. Braking in a curve can cause the vehicle to skid.

Slippery Roads - Slow down at the first sign of rain, snow, or sleet. These all make the roadway slippery. When the road is slippery, the vehicle's tires do not grip as well as they do on a dry road. How slow should you go? On a wet road you should reduce your speed about 10 mph. On packed snow you should cut your speed in half. Use snow tires or chains when the road has snow on it. On ice, you must slow to a crawl. It is very dangerous to drive on ice. If you become stranded in a snow storm, the best thing to do is stay in the car as you are more likely to be found.

If at all possible, do not drive when the roads are icy. In some areas where there is a lot of icy weather, special studded tires are allowed. Because these tires can cause road damage, they are not allowed in many areas or on certain roads. Studded tires are not allowed June 1 through September 30.

Some road surfaces are slippery at certain times or places. Here are some clues to help you spot slippery roads:

- On cold, wet days, shady spots can be icy. These areas freeze first and dry out last.
- Overpasses and other types of bridges can have icy spots. The pavement on bridges can be icy even when other pavement is not. This is because bridges do not have earth underneath them to help insulate them against the cold and thus can be colder and more icy than other roadways.
- When ice is around the freezing point, it can become wet. This makes it more slippery than at temperatures well below freezing.
- If it starts to rain on a hot day, pavement can be very slippery for the first few minutes. Heat causes oil in the asphalt to come to the surface. It makes the road more slippery until the oil is washed off.

Water on the Roadway - When it is raining or the road is wet, most tires have good traction up to about 35 mph. However, as you go faster, your tires will start to ride up on the water, like water skis. This is called "hydroplaning." In a heavy rain, your tires can lose all traction with the road at about 50 mph. Bald or badly worn tires will lose traction at much lower speeds. The best way to keep from hydroplaning is to slow down in the rain or when the road is wet.

If it feels like your tires have lost traction with the surface of the road you should:

- Ease your foot off the gas pedal.
- Keep the steering wheel straight. Only try to turn if it's an emergency. If you must turn, do it slowly, or you will cause your vehicle to skid.
- Do not try to stop or turn until your tires are gripping the road again.

Adjusting to Traffic

Vehicles moving in the same direction at the same speed cannot hit one another. Accidents involving two or more vehicles often happen when drivers go faster or slower than other vehicles on the road.

Keep Pace With Traffic - If you are going faster than traffic, you will have to keep passing others. Each time you pass someone, there is a chance for a collision. Drive with the flow of traffic, passing only as needed. The vehicle you are

passing may change lanes suddenly, or on a two-lane road, an oncoming car may appear suddenly. Slow down, and keep pace with other traffic. Speeding does not save more than a few minutes an hour. If you must exceed the speed limit to pass another vehicle, you should not pass until you can do so legally.

Going much slower than other vehicles can be just as bad as speeding. It tends to make vehicles bunch up behind you and causes the other traffic to pass you. If vehicles are piled-up behind you, pull over and let them pass when safe to do so. You should drive faster, or consider using a slower road.

Entering Into Traffic - When you merge with traffic, try to enter at the same speed that traffic is moving. Use your rearview mirror and look over your shoulder. High-speed roadways generally have ramps to give you time to build-up your speed. Use the ramp to reach the speed of other vehicles before you pull onto the road. Do not drive to the end of the ramp and stop. This will not leave you enough room to get up to the speed of traffic. Also, drivers behind you will not expect you to stop. If they are watching the traffic on the main road, you may be hit from the rear. If you have to wait for space to enter a roadway, slow down on the ramp so you have some room to speed-up before you have to merge. When travelling on a controlled access highway and you observe another driver entering, you should whenever possible, move to your left so that they may enter safely.

Leaving Traffic - Keep up with the speed of traffic as long as you are on the main road. If the road you are traveling has exit ramps, do not slow down until you move onto the exit ramp. When you turn from a high speed, two-lane roadway, try not to slow down too early if you have traffic following you. Tap your brakes and reduce your speed quickly but safely.

Slow Moving Troffic - Some vehicles cannot travel very fast, or have trouble keeping up with the speed of traffic. If you spot these vehicles early, you have time to change lanes or slow down safely. Slowing suddenly can cause a traffic accident.

- Watch for large trucks and small, underpowered cars on steep grades or when they are entering traffic. They can loose speed on long or steep hills and it takes longer for these vehicles to get up to speed when they enter traffic.
- Farm tractors, animal-drawn vehicles and roadway maintenance vehicles usually go 25 mph or less. These vehicles must have a slow-moving vehicle sign (an orange triangle) on the back.
- Slow moving vehicles must turn off the Roadway whenever sufficient area for a safe turnout exists when [4] or more vehicles are formed.

Trouble Spots - Wherever people or traffic gather, your room to maneuver is limited. You need to lower your speed to have time to react in a crowded space. Here are some of the places where you may need to slow down:

- Shopping centers, parking lots, and downtown areas. These are busy areas with vehicles and people stopping and starting, and moving in different directions.
- Rush Hours. Rush hours often have heavy traffic and drivers that always seem to be in a hurry.
- Narrow bridges and tunnels. Vehicles approaching each other are closer together.
- Toll plazas. Vehicles are changing lanes and preparing to stop and then speeding-up again leaving the plaza. The number of lanes could change both before and after the plaza.
- Schools, playgrounds, residential streets. These areas often have children present. Always be alert for them crossing the street, or running or riding into the street without looking.

How Well Can You See?

If something is in your path and you need to stop, you need to see it in time to be able to stop. It takes much longer and further to stop than many people think. If you have good tires and brakes and dry pavement:

- At 50 mph, it can take about 400 feet to react to something you see and bring your vehicle to a stop. That is about the length a city block.
- At 30 mph, it can take about 200 feet to stop. That is almost half a city block.

If you cannot see 400 feet ahead, it means you may not be driving safely at 50 mph. If you cannot see 200 feet ahead, you may not be driving safely at 30 mph. By the time you saw an object in your path, it might be too late to stop without hitting it. Nine out of ten traffic accidents are caused by errors in human judgement.

Here are some things that limit how well you can see and hints to be a safer driver.

Darkness - It is harder to see at night. You must be closer to an object to see it at night than during the day. You must be able to stop within the distance you can see ahead with your headlights. Your headlights will let you see about 400 feet ahead. You should drive at a speed that allows you to stop within this distance, or about 50 mph.

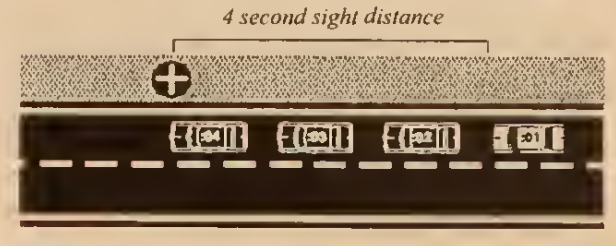
Rain, Fog or Snow - In a very heavy rain, snowstorm or thick fog, you may not be able to see much more than 200 feet ahead. When you cannot see any farther than that, you cannot safely drive faster than 30 mph. In a very heavy downpour, you may not be able to see well enough to drive. If this happens, pull off the road in a safe place and wait until it clears.

Hills and Curves - You may not know what is on the other side of a hill or just around a curve, even if you have driven the road hundreds of times. If a car is stalled on the road just over a hill or around a curve, you must be able to stop. Whenever you come to a hill or curve where you cannot see over or around, adjust your speed so you can stop if necessary.

Parked Cars - Vehicles parked along the side of the road may block your view. People may be ready to get out of a car or walk out from between parked vehicles. Give parked vehicles as much room as you can. Most accidents between cars that are parallel-parked and cars being driven on the street are caused by carelessness of the driver pulling away from the curb.

Sight-Distonce Rule - Drive at a speed where you can always safely stop. To tell if you are driving too fast for conditions, use the "Four Second Sight Distance Rule." Pick out a stationary object as far ahead as you can clearly see (e.g. a sign or a telephone pole). Start counting "one-one-thousand, two-one-thousand, three-one-thousand, four-one-thousand." If you reach the object before you finish saying "four-one-thousand," you need to slow down. You are going too fast for your sight-distance. You must not drive faster than the distance you can see. If you do, you are not safe and could injure or kill yourself or others.

You also can use the "Four Second Sight Distance Rule" at night to make sure you are not "over-driving your headlights."



Speed Limits - You must comply with speed limits. They are based on the design of the road, the type of vehicles that use them, and where they are located. They take into account things you cannot see, such as side roads and driveways where people may pull out suddenly and the amount of traffic that uses the road.

Remember, speed limits are posted for ideal conditions. If the road is wet or icy, if you cannot see well, or if traffic is heavy, then you must slow down. Even if you are driving under the posted speed limit, you can get a ticket for traveling too fast under these conditions.

Sharing Space

You always must share the road with others. The more distance you keep between yourself and everyone else, the more time you have to react to them. This space is like a safety cushion. The more you have, the safer it can be. This section describes how to make sure you have enough space around you when you drive.

Space Ahead

Rear-end crashes are very common. They are caused from drivers following too closely to be able to stop before hitting the vehicle ahead when it suddenly stops. There is an easy way to tell if you are following too closely. It is called the "two-second rule," and it works at any speed.

- Watch for when the rear of the vehicle ahead passes a sign, pole or any other stationary point. Count the seconds it takes you to reach the same spot.
- Count "one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two."
- You are following too closely if you pass the mark before you finish counting.
- If so, drop back and then count again at another spot to check the new following distance. Repeat until you are following no closer than "two seconds."

There are situations where you need more space in front of your vehicle. In these situations, you may need a four second following distance to be safe.

- *On Slippery Roads.* As you need more distance to stop your vehicle on slippery roads, you must leave more space in front of you. If the vehicle ahead suddenly stops, you will need the extra distance to stop safely.
- *When the Driver Behind You Wonts to Pass.* Slow down to allow room in front of your vehicle. Slowing also will allow the pass to be completed sooner.
- *When Following Motorcycles.* If the motorcycle should fall, you need extra distance to avoid the rider. The chances of a fall are greatest on wet or icy roads, gravel roads, or metal surfaces such as bridges, gratings, or streetcar or railroad tracks.
- *When Following Drivers Who Cannot See You.* The drivers of trucks, buses, vans, or vehicles pulling campers or trailers may not be able to see you when you are directly behind them. They could stop suddenly without knowing you are behind them. These large vehicles also block your view of the road ahead. Falling back allows you more room to see ahead.
- *When You Have a Heavy Load or ore Pulling o Trailer.* The extra weight increases your stopping distance.
- *When It Is Hord For You To See.* When it hard for you to see ahead because of darkness or bad weather, you need to increase your following distance.
- *When Being Followed Closely.* If you are being followed closely, you should allow extra room. You will then be able to stop without being hit from behind.
- *When Following Emergency Vehicles.* Police vehicles, ambulances and fire trucks need more room to operate.
- *When Approoching Railroad Crossings.* Leave extra room for vehicles required to come to a stop at railroad crossings, including transit buses, school buses, or vehicles carrying hazardous materials.
- *When Stopped on a Hill.* Leave extra space when stopped on a hill. The vehicle ahead may roll back when it starts up.

Space Behind

It is not always easy to maintain a safe distance behind your vehicle. However, you can help keep the driver at a safe distance by keeping a steady speed, and signaling in advance when you have to slow down.

- *Stopping to pick up or let off possengers.* Try to find a safe place out of traffic to stop.
- *Parallel Porking.* If you want to parallel park and there is traffic coming behind you, put on your turn signal, pull next to the space, allow following vehicles to pass before you park.
- *Driving Slowly.* When you have to drive so slowly that you slow down other cars, pull to the side of the road when safe to do so, and let them pass. There are "turnout" areas on some two lane roads you could use. Other two lane roads sometimes have "passing lanes."
- *Being Toilgated.* Every now and then, you may find yourself being followed closely or "tailgated" by another driver. If you are being followed too closely and there is a right lane, move over to the right. If there is no right lane, wait until the way ahead is clear then reduce speed slowly. This will encourage the tailgater to drive around you. Never slow down quickly to discourage a tailgater, all that does is increase your risk of being hit from behind.

Space to the Side

You need space on both sides of your vehicle to have room to turn or change lanes.

- Avoid driving next to other vehicles on multi-lane roads. Someone may crowd your lane or try to change lanes and pull into you. Move ahead or drop back of the other vehicle.
- Keep as much space as you can between yourself and oncoming vehicles. On a two lane road, this means not crowding the center line. In general, it is safest to drive in the center of your lane.
- Make room for vehicles entering on a roadway that has two or more lanes. If there is no one next to you, move over a lane.
- Keep extra space between your vehicle and parked cars. Someone could step out from a parked vehicle, or from between vehicles, or a parked vehicle could pull out.
- Give extra space to pedestrians or bicycles, especially children. They can move into your path quickly and without warning. Do not share a lane with a pedestrian or bicyclist. Wait until it is safe to pass in the adjoining lane.
- "Split the difference rule." Split the difference between two hazards. For example, steer a middle course between oncoming and parked vehicles. However, if one is more dangerous than the other, leave a little more space on the danger side. In the example, if the oncoming vehicle is a tractor-trailer, leave a little more room on the side that the truck will pass.
- When possible, take potential hazards one at a time. For example, if you are overtaking a bicycle and an oncoming vehicle is approaching, slow down and let the vehicle pass first so that you can give extra room to the bicycle.

Space to Merge

Anytime you want to merge with other traffic, you need a gap of about four seconds. If you move into the middle of a four second gap, both you and the vehicle that is now behind you have a two-second following distance. You need a four-second gap whenever you change lanes, enter a roadway, or your lane merges with another travel lane.

- Do not try to merge into a gap that is too small. A small gap can quickly become even smaller. Enter a gap that gives you a big enough space cushion to be safe.
- If you want to cross several lanes, take them one at a time. Like going up or down stairs one step at a time, it is safest and easiest to merge one lane at a time. It is very difficult to determine that all the lanes are free and safe to cross. If you were to wait until all the lanes were clear, you could tie up traffic and even cause a crash.

Space to Cross or Enter

When you cross traffic, you need a large enough gap to get all the way across the road. When you enter traffic, you need enough space to first turn and then to get up to speed.

- When you cross traffic, you need room to get all the way across. Stopping halfway across is only safe when there is a median divider large enough to hold your car. Do not stop in a divider where part of your vehicle is sticking into traffic.
- If you are turning left, make sure there are no vehicles or pedestrians blocking your path. You do not want to be caught waiting for a path to clear while being stuck across a lane that has an oncoming vehicle bearing down on you.
- Even if you have the green light, do not start across the intersection if there are cars blocking your way. If you are caught in the intersection when the light changes to red, you will block other traffic. You can get a ticket for blocking an intersection.
- Never assume another driver will share space with you or give you space. Do not turn just because an approaching vehicle has a turn signal on. The driver may plan to turn beyond you, or have forgotten to turn the signal off from a prior turn. This is particularly true of motorcycles, their signals often do not cancel by themselves. Wait until the other driver actually starts to turn and then go if it is safe to do so.

Spacing

Whenever signs or road markings permit you to pass, you will have to judge whether you have enough room to pass safely. Do not count on having enough time to pass several cars at once. Be safe, as a general rule, only pass one vehicle at a time.

- Oncoming Vehicles. At a speed of 55 mph, you need about 10 seconds to pass. That means you need a 10 second gap in oncoming traffic and sight-distance to pass. You must judge whether you have enough space to pass safely.

At 55 mph you will travel over 800 feet in 10 seconds. So will an oncoming vehicle. That means you need over 1600 feet or about one-third of a mile to pass safely. It is hard to judge the speed of oncoming vehicles at this distance. They do not seem to be coming as fast as they really are. A vehicle that is far enough away generally appears to be standing still. In fact, if you can really see it coming closer, it may be too close for you to pass. If you are not sure, wait to pass until you are sure that there is enough space.

- Hills and Curves. You have to be able to see at least one-third of a mile or about 10 seconds ahead. Anytime your view is blocked by a curve or a hill, you should assume that there is an oncoming vehicle just out of sight. Therefore you should treat a curve or a hill as you do an oncoming vehicle. This means you should not start to pass if you are within one-third of a mile of a hill or curve.
- Intersections. It is dangerous to pass where a vehicle is likely to enter or cross the road. Such places include intersections, railroad crossings, and shopping center entrances. While you are passing, your view of people, vehicles or a train can be blocked by the vehicle you are passing. Also, drivers turning right into the approaching lane, will not expect to find you approaching in their lane. They may not even look your way before turning.

- Lane Restrictions. Before you pass, look ahead for road conditions and traffic that may cause other vehicles to move into your lane. You might lose your space for passing because of:
  - People or bicyclists near the road
  - A narrow bridge or other situation that causes reduced lane width
  - A patch of ice, pot hole, or something on the road.
  - Space to Return. Do not pass unless you have enough space to return to the driving lane. And do not count upon other drivers to make room for you.

Before you return to the driving lane, be sure to leave enough room between yourself and the vehicle you have passed. When you can see both headlights of the vehicle you just passed in your rearview mirror, it is safe to return to the driving lane.

Space for Special Situations

There are certain drivers and other road users you should give extra room. Here are some of them.

Those Who Cannot See You - Anyone who cannot see you may enter your path without knowing you are there. Those who could have trouble seeing you include:

- Drivers at intersections, or driveways, whose view is blocked by buildings, trees or other cars.
- Drivers backing into the roadway, or backing into or pulling out of parking spaces.
- Drivers whose windows are covered with snow or ice or steamed-up.
- Pedestrians with umbrellas in front of their faces or hats pulled down.

People Who are Distracted - Even when others can see you, allow extra room or be extra cautious if you think they may be distracted. People who may be distracted include: delivery persons, construction workers, children, and drivers who are not paying attention to their driving.

People Who May Be Confused - People who are confused may cause an unsafe situation. People who may be confused include:

- Tourists, or others who do not seem to know where they are going.
- Drivers who slow down for what seems like no reason.
- Drivers looking for street signs or house numbers.

Drivers In Trouble - If another driver makes a mistake, do not make it worse. For example, drivers who pass you when they do not have enough room. Slow down and let them return to the drive lane safely. If another driver needs to suddenly change lanes, slow down and let them merge. These gestures will keep traffic moving smoothly and safely.

BE IN SHAPE TO DRIVE

Driving safely is not always easy. In fact, it is one of the most complex things that people do. It also is one of the few things we do regularly that can injure and kill us. It is worth the effort to be a careful driver.

To be a safe driver takes a lot of skill and judgement. This task is even more difficult when you are just learning to drive. Driving can easily take all the ability you have. If anything happens so you are not up to your ability, you may not be a safe driver. Your ability to be a safe driver depends on being able to see clearly, not being overly tired, not driving while on drugs, being generally healthy, and being emotionally fit to drive. In other words, being in "shape" to drive safely.

Vision And Hearing

Vision

Good vision is a must for safe driving. You drive based on what you see. If you cannot see clearly, you will have trouble identifying traffic and road conditions, spotting potential trouble, and reacting in a timely manner.

Vision is so important that Montana requires that you pass a vision test before you get a driver license. This test measures that you have at least 20/40 vision in at least one eye, with or without corrective lenses.

Other important aspects of vision are:

- Side vision - You need to see "out the corner of your eye." This lets you spot vehicles and other potential trouble on either side of you while you look ahead. Because you can not focus on things to the side, you also must use your side mirrors and glance to the side if necessary.
- Judging distances and speeds - Even if you can see clearly, you still may not be able to judge distances or speeds very well. In fact, you are not alone, many people have problems judging distances and speeds. It takes a lot of practice to be able to judge both. It is especially important in knowing how far you are from other vehicles and judging safe gaps when merging, and when passing on two lane roads.
- Night vision - Many people who can see clearly in the daytime have trouble seeing at night. All people have more trouble seeing at night than in the daytime. Some drivers have problems with glare while driving at night, especially with the glare of oncoming headlights. If you have problems seeing at night, don't drive more than is necessary, and when you do, be very careful.

Because it is so important to safe driving to see well, you should have your eyes checked every year or two by an eye specialist. You may never know you have poor vision unless your eyes are tested.

If you need to wear glasses or contact lenses for driving, remember to:

- Always wear them when you drive, even if it is only to run down to the corner. If your driver license says you must wear corrective lenses and you are not and you happen to be stopped, you could get a ticket.
- Try to keep an extra pair of glasses in your vehicle. Then if your regular glasses were to break or be lost, you can drive safely. This also can be helpful if you do not wear glasses all the time. It is easy to misplace them.
- Avoid using dark glasses or tinted contact lenses at night, even if it is to help with glare. The problem is that they cut down too much light. Light that you need to see clearly.

Hearing

Hearing can be helpful to safe driving. The sound of horns, a siren, or screeching tires can warn you of danger. Hearing problems, like bad eyesight, can come on so slowly that you do not notice it. Drivers who know they are deaf or have hearing problems can adjust and be safe drivers. They learn to rely more on their vision and stay alert. Studies have shown that the driving records of hearing impaired drivers are just as good as those drivers with good hearing.

Fatigue

When you are tired, you cannot drive as safely as when you are rested. You do not see as well nor are as alert as when you are rested. It takes you more time to make decisions and you do not always make good decisions. You can be more irritable and can get upset more easily. Lastly, when you are tired, you could fall asleep behind the wheel and crash. There are things you can do to help from getting tired on a long trip.

- Try to get a normal night's sleep before you leave.
- Do not leave on a trip if you are already tired Plan your trips so you can leave when you are rested.
- Do not take any medicine that can make you drowsy.
- Eat lightly. Do not eat a large meal before you leave. Some people get sleepy after they eat a big meal.
- Take breaks. Stop every two hours or so, or when you need to. Walk around, get some fresh air, and have some coffee, soda, or juice. The few minutes spent on a rest break can save your life. Plan for plenty of time to complete your trip safely.
- Try not to drive late at night when you are normally asleep. Your body thinks it is time to go to sleep and will try to do so.
- Never drive if you are sleepy. It is better to stop and sleep for a few hours than to take a chance you can stay awake. If possible, switch off with another driver and you can sleep while they drive.

Drinking And Driving

Alcohol is involved in about 40% of the traffic accidents in which somebody is killed. If you drink alcohol, even a little, your chances of being in an accident are much greater than if you did not drink any alcohol.

No one can drink alcohol and drive safely, even if you have been driving for many years. New drivers are more affected by alcohol than experienced drivers, because new drivers are still learning to drive.

Because drinking alcohol and then driving is so dangerous, the penalties are very tough. People who drive after drinking risk getting heavy fines, higher insurance rates, loss of license, and even jail sentences.

Why is Drinking and Driving So Dangerous?

Alcohol reduces all of the important skills you need to drive safely. After you drink alcohol, it goes from your stomach into your blood and to all parts of your body. It reaches your brain in 20 to 40 minutes. In your brain, alcohol affects those areas of your brain that control judgement and skill. This is one reason why drinking alcohol is so dangerous, it affects your judgement. Good judgement is important to driving. But in this case, judgement helps you to know when to stop drinking. In a way, it's like alcohol puts good judgement on hold. You do not know when you have had too much to drink until it is too late. It is a little like a sunburn, by the time you feel it, it is already too late.

Alcohol slows your reflexes and reaction time, reduces your ability to see clearly, and makes you less alert. As the amount of alcohol in your body increases, your judgement worsens and your skill decreases. You will have trouble judging distances, speeds and the movement of other vehicles. Finally, you will have trouble controlling your vehicle.

If You Drink, When Can You Drive?

The best advice is: if you drink alcohol, do not drive. Even one drink of alcohol can affect your driving.

An alcohol drink is a 1 1/2 oz. of 80-proof liquor (one shot glass) straight or with a mixer, 12 oz. of beer (a regular size can, bottle, mug, or glass), or a 5 oz. glass of wine. Specialty drinks can have more alcohol in them and are the same as having several normal drinks.

It takes about an hour for your body to get rid of each drink. So, even if you have spread out your drinks, you should stop drinking at least one hour before you have to drive. There is no way to sober up quickly. Coffee, fresh air, exercise, or cold showers will not help. Sleep will not help you to sober up. Time is the only thing that will sober you up.

There are ways of dealing with social drinking situations. Arrange to go with two or more persons, where one of you will not drink alcohol. You can rotate among the group being a "designated driver." If available, you might use public transportation, or use a cab.

If you drink alcohol, there are ways to control the effects. The best is to space out your drinking. If you drink 1 drink an hour, alcohol will not build-up in your blood, and you will not be affected. Another is to eat before and while you are drinking. Food in your stomach slows down how fast alcohol gets into your blood. Eat before you drink and while you are drinking. Starchy foods like potato chips, pretzels, bread, and crackers are best. But remember, food only slows when alcohol gets into your blood, it will not keep you from getting drunk.

12 oz. can of regular beer

5 oz. glass of table wine

1½ oz. shot of 80 proof liquor

Alcohol and The Law

You are not allowed to buy alcohol unless you are 21 years of age. If you are arrested for drinking and driving, the penalties are severe. You can be arrested for driving with a blood alcohol content (BAC) of [.10%] or more or driving while under the influence. BAC is the percentage of alcohol in your blood, and is usually determined by a breath, blood, or urine test. If a police or traffic officer asks you to take a test, you must do so. [You can lose your driver license if you refuse to take a BAC test.]

If you are found guilty of an alcohol violation and it is your first conviction, you will be fined from $100-$500, plus court charges. you could be sentenced to 1-60 days in jail, and your license will be suspended for 6 months. For second and subsequent convictions the penalties are much worse.

Report a Drunk Driver

In December of 1981, the Governor, the Attorney General, and officials from the Montana Highway Traffic Safety Division, the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division and the Montana Highway Patrol inaugurated the "Report a Drunk Driver" program.

Nationally over 23,000 deaths occur yearly as a direct result of a drinking driver. In Montana, 50 % of all traffic fatalities are alcohol related, and over 2100 injuries are the result of a drinking driver. The problem is immense, and the "Report a Drunk Driver" program is designed to help rid the roads and highways of our NUMBER ONE killer.

The program is very simple. All it requires is everyone's concern and a phone call. All citizens who suspect a person of driving while intoxicated are asked to call their local law enforcement agency or the Montana Highway Patrol and give a description of the vehicle, where and when they saw it, and the direction in which the suspected vehicle was traveling. You do not have to give your name. Law enforcement personnel will attempt to make contact with the suspect vehicle, and if probable cause can be determined, an arrest will be made.

The program works. Current statistics show that law enforcement officials are able to make contact with 37 percent of those suspected of driving under the influence, and of those contacted, 71 percent are being arrested for drunk driving. Two drinking drivers are being arrested each day in Montana as a direct result of this program. If you see someone you suspect of driving while intoxicated, or need to report an accident, you may call toll free 1-800-525-5555.

REPORT A DRUNK DRIVER

1-800-525-5555

Other Drugs And Driving

Besides alcohol, there are many other drugs that can affect a person's ability to drive safely. These drugs can have effects like those of alcohol, or even worse. This is true of many prescription drugs or even many of the drugs you can buy without a prescription. Drugs taken for headaches, colds, hay fever or other allergies, or to calm nerves can make a person drowsy and affect their driving. Pep pills, "uppers," and diet pills can make a driver feel more alert for a short time. Later, however, they can cause a person to be nervous, dizzy, not able to concentrate, and they can affect your vision. Other prescription drugs can affect your reflexes, judgement, vision, and alertness in ways similar to alcohol.

If you are driving, check the label before you take a drug for warnings about its effect. If you are not sure if it safe to take the drug and drive, ask your doctor or pharmacist about any side effects.

Never drink alcohol while you are taking other drugs. These drugs could multiply the effects of alcohol, or have additional effects of their own. These effects not only reduce your ability to be a safe driver, but the effects could cause serious health problems, even death.

Illegal drugs are not good for your health and effect your ability to be a safe driver. For example, studies have shown that people who use marijuana make more mistakes, have more trouble adjusting to glare, and get arrested for traffic violations more than other drivers.

Health

Many health problems can affect your driving – a bad cold, infection, or a virus. Even little problems like a stiff neck, a cough, or a sore leg can affect your driving. If you are not feeling well and need to go somewhere, let someone else drive.

Some conditions can be very dangerous:

- Epilepsy – A person suffering from a condition needs a physician to attest in writing that the persons's condition has stabilized and would not be likely to interfere with that person's ability to operate a motor vehicle safely.
- Diabetes – Diabetics who take insulin should not drive when there is any chance of going into shock. Such a situation could result from skipping a meal or snack, or from taking the wrong amount of insulin. It also might be a good idea to have someone else drive for during times when your doctor is adjusting your insulin dosage. If you have diabetes, you also should have your eyes checked regularly for possible night blindness and other vision problems.
- Heart Condition – People with heart diseases, high blood pressure, or circulation problems and in danger of a blackout, fainting, or a heart attack should not get behind the wheel. If you are being treated by a doctor for a heart condition, ask if the condition could affect your driving safely.

Emotions

Stress can lessen your concentration on the driving task and emotions can have a great affect on your driving safely. You may not be able to drive well if you are overly worried, excited, afraid, angry, or just down.

- If you are angry or excited, give yourself time to cool off. If necessary, take a short walk, but stay off the road until you have calmed down.
- If you are worried or down about something, try to keep your mind on your driving. Some find listening to the radio helps.
- If you are impatient, give yourself extra time for your driving trip. Leave a few minutes early. If you have plenty of time, you may not tend to speed, or do other things that can get you a traffic ticket or cause a crash.

EMERGENCIES

All drivers sooner or later will find themselves in an emergency situation. As careful as you are, there are situations that could cause you a problem. If you are prepared, you may be able to prevent any serious outcomes.

Vehicle Emergencies

There is always a chance of a vehicle problem while driving. You should follow the recommended maintenance schedule listed in the vehicle owner's manual. Following these preventive measures greatly reduces the chance your vehicle will have a problem. The following notes some possible vehicle failures and what you can do if they happen.

If your vehicles right wheels leave the pavement, take your foot off the accelerator and when slowed down, ease back on the road when safe.

Brake Failure

If your brakes stop working:

- Pump the brake pedal several times. This will often build up enough brake pressure to allow you to stop.
- If that does not work, use the parking brake. Pull on the parking brake handle slowly so you will not lock the rear wheels and cause a skid. Be ready to release the brake if the vehicle does start to skid.
- If that does not work, start shifting to lower gears and look for a safe place to slow to a stop. Make sure the car is off the roadway. Do not drive the vehicle without brakes.

Tire Blowout

If a tire suddenly goes flat:

- Hold the steering wheel tightly, and keep the vehicle going straight.
- Slow down gradually. Take your foot off the gas pedal and use the brakes lightly.
- Do not stop on the road if at all possible. Pull off the road in a safe place.

Power Failure

If the engine dies while you are driving:

- Keep a strong grip on the steering wheel. Be aware that the steering may be difficult to turn but you can turn it.
- Pull off the roadway. The brakes will still work but you may have to push very hard on the brake pedal.

Headlight Failure

If your headlights suddenly go out:

- Try the headlight switch a few times.
- If that does not work, put on the emergency flashers, turn signals, or fog lights on, if you have them.
- Pull off the road as soon as possible.

Gas Pedal Sticks

The motor keeps going faster and faster:

- Keep your eyes on the road.
- Quickly shift to neutral.
- Apply steady pressure on the brake.
- Pull off the road when safe to do so.
- Turn off the engine.

Avoiding Collisions

When it looks like a collision may happen, many drivers panic and fail to act. In some cases they do act, but do something that does not help to reduce the chance of the collision. There almost always is something you can do to avoid the crash, or reduce the results of the crash. In avoiding a collision, drivers have three options: (1) stop, (2) turn, and (3) speed up.

Stopping Quickly

Many newer vehicles have ABS (Antilock Braking System). Be sure to read the vehicle owner's manual on how to use the ABS. The ABS system will allow you stop without skidding.

In general, if you need to stop quickly:

- With ABS - If you have an antilock braking system and you need to stop quickly:
  - Press on the brake pedal as hard as you can and keep pressing on it.
  - You might feel the brake pedal pushing back when the ABS is working. Do not let-up on the brake pedal. The ABS system will only work with the brake pedal pushed down.
- Without ABS - If you must stop quickly and you do not have an antilock braking system:
  - You can cause the vehicle to go into a skid if you brake too hard.
  - Apply the brakes as hard as you can without locking them.
  - If the brakes lock-up, you will feel the vehicle start to skid. Quickly let up on the brake pedal.
  - As soon as the vehicle stops skidding, push down on the brake pedal again. Keep doing this until the vehicle has stopped.

Turning Quickly

In most cases, you can turn the vehicle quicker than you can stop it. You should consider turning in order to avoid a collision.

Make sure you have a good grip with both hands on the steering wheel. It is best to have your hands at about the 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock positions. Once you have turned away or changed lanes, you must be ready to keep the vehicle under control. Some drivers steer away from one collision only to end up in another. Always steer in the direction you want the vehicle to go.

With ABS - One aspect of having ABS, is that you can turn your vehicle while braking without skidding. This is very helpful if you must turn and stop or slow down.

Without ABS - If you do not have ABS, you must use a different procedure to turn quickly. You also step on the brake pedal, but then you let-up and turn the steering wheel. Braking will slow the vehicle some, and it puts more weight on the front tires and this allows for a quicker turn. Do not lock-up the front wheels while braking or turn so sharply that the vehicle can only plow ahead.

Another consideration is that generally it is better to run off the road than to crash head-on into another vehicle.

Speeding Up

Sometimes it is best or necessary to speed up to avoid a collision. This may happen when another vehicle is about to hit you from the side or from behind and there is room to the front of you to get out of danger. Be sure to slow down once the danger has passed.

Dealing With Skids

Any road that is safe under normal conditions can be dangerous when it is wet, or has snow or ice on it. High speeds under normal conditions also increase the possibility of a skid if you must turn or stop suddenly. Skids are caused when the tires can no longer grip the road.

As you can not control a vehicle when it is skidding, it is best not to cause your vehicle to skid in the first place. In the vast majority of cases, skids were caused by drivers traveling too fast for conditions.

If your vehicle begins to skid:

- *Stay off the brake.* Until the vehicle slows, your brakes will not work and could cause you to skid more.
- *Steer.* Turn the steering wheel in the direction you want the vehicle to go. As soon as the vehicle begins to straighten out, turn the steering wheel back the other way. If you do not do so, your vehicle may swing around in the other direction and you could start a new skid.
- *Continue to Steer.* Continue to correct your steering, left and right, until the vehicle is again moving down the road under your control.

Protect Yourself In Collisions

You may not always be able to avoid a collision. Try everything you can to keep from getting hit. If nothing works, try to lessen any injuries that could result from the crash. The most important thing you can do is to use your lap and shoulder belts. Other than your safety belts, there are a couple of other things that could help prevent more serious injuries.

Hit From the Rear

If your vehicle is hit from the rear, your body will be thrown back towards the rear of your vehicle. Press yourself against the back of your seat and put your head against the head restraint. Be ready to apply your brakes so that you will not be pushed into another vehicle.

Hit From the Side

If your vehicle is hit from the side, your body will be thrown towards the side that is hit. Air bags will not help in this situation. Your lap and shoulder belts are needed to help keep you behind the wheel. Get ready to steer or brake to prevent your vehicle from hitting something else.

Hit From the Front

If your vehicle is about to be hit from the front it is important to try and have a "glancing blow" rather than being struck head on. This means that if a collision is going to happen, try and turn the vehicle. At worse, you hit with a glancing blow. You might miss it. If your vehicle has an air bag, it will inflate. It also will deflate following the crash, so be ready to prevent your vehicle from hitting something else. You must use your lap and shoulder belts to keep you behind the wheel, and to protect you if your vehicle has a second crash.

Accidents

Do not stop at an accident unless you are involved or emergency help has not yet arrived. Keep your attention on your driving and keep moving, watching for people who might be in or near the road. Never drive to the scene of an accident, fire, or other disaster just to look. You may block the way for police, firefighters, ambulances, and tow trucks and other rescue vehicles.

No matter how good a driver you are, there may be a time when you are involved in a crash. If you are involved in an accident you must stop. If you are involved in an accident with a parked vehicle, you must try and locate the owner. If any person is injured or killed, the police must be notified. It is a crime for you to leave a crash site where your vehicle was involved if there is an injury or death before police have talked to you and gotten all the information they need about the crash.

You may want to carry a basic emergency kit in your vehicle, that has flares and first aid supplies.

At the accident scene

- Stop your vehicle at or near the accident site. If your vehicle can move, get it off the road so that it does not block traffic.
- Do not stand or walk in traffic lanes. You could be struck by another vehicle.
- Turn off the ignition of wrecked vehicles. Do not smoke around wrecked vehicles. Fuel could have spilled and fire is a real danger.
- If there are electrical wires down, do not go near them.
- Make sure that other traffic will not be involved in the crash. Use flares or other warning devices to alert traffic of the accident.

If someone is injured

- Get help. Make sure the police and emergency medical or rescue squad have been called. If there is a fire, tell the police when they are called.
- Do not move the injured unless they are in a burning car or in other immediate danger. Moving a person can make their injuries worse.
- First, help anyone who is not already walking and talking. Check for breathing then check for bleeding.
- If there is bleeding, apply direct pressure directly on the wound with your hand or with a cloth. Even severe bleeding can almost always be stopped or slowed by using pressure on the wound.
- Do not give injured persons anything to drink, not even water.
- To help prevent an injured person from going into shock, cover them with a blanket or coat to keep them warm.

Report the Accident

- Get the names and addresses of all people involved in the accident and any witnesses. Also make sure to get the names and addresses of any injured persons.
- Exchange information with other drivers involved in the crash. Name, address, driver license number, vehicle information (license plate, make, model and year of vehicle), and insurance company and policy number if available.
- Record any damage to the vehicles involved in the crash.
- Provide information to the police or other emergency officials if requested.
- Should the accident involve a parked car, try to find the owner. If you cannot, leave a note in a place where it can be seen with information on how the owner can reach you and the date and time of the accident.
- You must report the accident and file a report if there is an injury, a death, or property damage of $400 or more to one person's property. Accident forms are at law enforcement agencies or available from most insurance agents. You must file the report within 10 days of the accident. If you are injured and unable to complete the report, someone may file it for you.

Financial or Insurance Responsibility Requirements

The provisions of the Motor Vehicle Safety Responsibility Act require the deposit of proof of financial responsibility for the future. It applies to persons who have been convicted of or forfeited bail for offenses which result in revocation of a driver's license under motor vehicle laws or who have failed to pay judgements upon causes of action arising out of motor vehicle laws.

Should you be involved in an accident, your license and registration can be suspended if you are found liable for the damages in a court of law and you fail to satisfy (pay) the judgement within sixty (60) days. Remember, suspension is automatic. It remains in force until the judgement has been paid or six (6) years have elapsed. Additionally, you will be required to maintain proof of financial responsibility for the future.

How can you protect yourself? The law provides several ways. Under the law, you must, regardless of any insurance you carry, report an accident in which a person is killed or injured or property damage exceeds $250.00. Thereafter, however, this law does not apply to an operator or owner of a motor vehicle under any of the following conditions: to the operator or owner if such owner had in effect at the time of the accident an automobile liability policy with respect to the car involved; to the operator, if not the owner of such motor vehicle, if there was in effect at the time of the accident an automobile liability policy or bond with respect to his operation of motnr vehicles not owned by him; to the operator or owner for damages resulting from the accident is covered by any other acceptable form of liability insurance policy or bond.

Insurance for resident owners or operators must be written by an insurance company licensed to do business in Mnntana and provide the following minimum coverage; $10,000 for property damage, $25,000 from injuries or death sustained by one person, $50,000 for all personal injuries of death resulting from one accident.

The law also provides that owners of more than twenty-five (25) motor vehicles registered in the State of Montana may qualify as self-insurers. In the case of non-resident owners or operators who are involved in any accident in Montana, adequate insurance written by a company licensed to do business in this state will be accepted. Non-residents owning or operating motor vehicles in Montana are subject to all of the provisions and penalties of the Safety Responsibility Law - and if they do not comply, their driving privileges in the State of Montana will be withdrawn. A certified copy of the record will be sent to a non-resident's home state if it has a law authorizing authorities to act on it.

Dear New Licensee:

On behalf of the Montana Highway Patrol, I would like to welcome you to the ranks of the licensed motor vehicle operators in Montana.

In order to get your license, you had to do a number of things. You, of course, had to study the laws and rules governing motor vehicle use in Montana. You had to show your knowledge by successfully completing written and driving tests. You had to show your willingness to obey the laws while you were taking this road test. If nothing else, I would wish that you continue to recognize these laws and continue to obey them. Many drivers, it seems, forget the laws and develop bad habits which of course is how a lot of accidents happen. Even if you do everything right, there is still a chance someone else may cause you a problem, so the slogans developed over the years, such as "Drive Defensively" and "Watch out for the other guy," still apply.

Speed too fast for conditions, inattentive driving and impaired driving, either by alcohol or drugs, still remain the leading causes of accidents. I request you keep these in the front of your mind at all times while driving. Constant awareness of these three things will go a long way to prevent you from having an accident.

Over the years new laws and education have combined to make our roads much safer. Buckling your seat belt and making sure all your passengers do also, is a quick way to protect yourself. No other measure in recent years has had the lifesaving impact that this quick habit has.

Good luck to you! The Patrol officers are out there working for you, but we all need help. Drive safely, report erratic drivers, and do your share to make the roads of Montana safer for all.

We wish you many years of motoring pleasure.

Colonel Craig T. Reap, Chief
Montana Highway Patrol

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A QUICK REFERENCE TO MOTOR VEHICLE INFORMATION IN MONTANA

As a motor vehicle owner or driver, you may have questions. In the following you will find information to help you understand motor vehicle regulations in Montana.

Driver Licensing:

- New residents must apply within 90 days, 30 days for commercial
- Drivers License number will be your Social Security number. If you do not wish to use the Social Security number we will use a pseudo number.
- Written, vision, and driving test for first license
- Operator's License, valid for maximum of 4 to 8 years, expiring on hnlder's birthday
- Minimum age, 16 years, (15 years with Driver's Training) Valid until 21st birthday
- Moped operators must have valid Montana Driver's License in possession at all times, Motorcycle Endorsement required to operate motorcycle or motor scooter
- Fees: Driver's License, Operator's $4.00 a year, Motorcycle or Motor scooter Endorsement 50¢ a year, Duplicate Driver's License $5.00, ID Cards $8.00, See Commercial Manual for Commercial Fees. Apply for licenses at County Treasurer's Office or other authorized agent.
- Administered by Motor Vehicle Division, Field Operations Bureau

Registration of Motor Vehicles

- All motor vehicles and all trailers must be registered
- Application is made at the County Treasurer of residence
- The previous year's registration receipt MUST BE presented when registering motor vehicles
- Registration application is made by a nonresident, when residence is established or becomes gainfully employed
- A copy of the registration certificate MUST BE kept when registering motor vehicles
- The registration is your receipt and record of the property tax or vehicle license fee paid to the county

License Plates

- Issued by County Treasurer where vehicle is subject to tax or fee
- Issued for one year
- Anniversary months are assigned according to month which vehicle is first registered and is identified by the decal on the license plate
- Vehicles on non-staggered system – trucks exceeding 10,000 lbs., G.V.W., (exceed 1 ton eff. 01/01/96), amateur radio, disabled veterans, trailers, semi-trailers, tractors, buses, motorcycles, cycle motors, and special mobile equipment. Expiration date December 31 and must be renewed by February 15. Motor homes and travel trailers expire annually on April 30, and must be renewed by June 15.
- Vehicles on staggered system – passenger cars, and light trucks up to 10,000 lbs., G.V.W., (1 ton and under eff. 01/01/96), (except amateur radio and disabled veterans). Renewal by the last day of the anniversary month.
- Plates stay with the owners, it is their responsibility to remove them
- Plates may be transferred to another vehicle ONLY when proper application is made through County Treasurer
- A vehicle may be operated without plates for a 20-day grace period, before registration, by displaying a 20-day permit issued by a dealer if purchased from a dealer, or a vehicle purchase permit issued by the County Treasurer and participating law enforcement agencies if purchased from an individual.
- Renewal Notice is mailed for vehicles on the staggered system, FAILURE TO RECEIVE NOTICE does not relieve the owner of renewal responsibility

Travel Trailers

- Less than 3 years old $60.00
- 4 years old and older $22.50

Campers

- Less than 3 years old $52.50
- 4 years old and older $22.50
- Tax Paid Decal ..... $ 1.00

What You Should Know About Your Title

- All motor vehicles, trailers and snowmobiles are issued Titles – application is made at the County Treasurer's Office of the applicant's residence. Motorboats and sailboats 12 feet in length or longer are titled. All-terrain vehicles are titled. New pickup campers must be titled also.
- Any erasures or deletions will void the title, see your County Treasurer to correct any errors
- Motor vehicle records are kept and the Certificate of Title is produced by the Title and Registration Bureau in Deer Lodge, Montana

When Purchasing from a Car Dealer

- The dealer will send all documents to the County Treasurer within four working days from the date of sale

When Buying a Vehicle

- Obtain the Title and Registration Receipt from the seller
- Title must be signed by all registered owners and signatures notarized
- The Odometer reading must be recorded by the seller in the space provided on the reverse side of the Title or on a separate statement required for all motor vehicles 9 years old or newer.
- Be very sure liens have been paid and released
- Very important to obtain the last Registration Receipt. BACK TAXES OR FEES CAN BE CHARGED TO THE PURCHASER, if current registration cannot be produced
- Always compare the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) which appears on the Title with the number stamped or affixed to the vehicle. If the two number do not agree, do not complete the purchase until legal ownership is verified.
- Application for new Title and Registration must be made to the County Treasure of residence within 20 days (failure to make application within 20 days grace period subjects the transferee to a penalty). 20 day permit issued by County Treasurer.

Registration and License Plate Fees:

- Motor vehicles weighing 2,850 pounds and under $10.25
- All passenger cars weighing over 2,850 pounds and all trucks $15.25
- Personalized license plates, $25 in addition to other fees, $10 for renewal or transfer to another vehicle. *(Must be renewed by end of grace period or plate will be available to another requesting such plate.)*
- Motorcycles ..... $ 7.25
- Trailers 2,500 pounds GVW ..... $ 7.25
- Trailers over 2,500 pounds up to 6,000 pounds $10.25
- Trailers over 6,000 pounds GVW $15.25
- Travel Trailers ..... $ 7.25

Taxes

- Personal property tax rate varies in local taxing jurisdictions
- Information on tax assessments and fees are obtained at the offices of County Treasurer and County Assessor
- Taxes or fees may be assessed for the year prior to current registration year (if not paid by seller)
- New use tax on new motor vehicles, based on F.O.B. factory list 1 ½% for full year

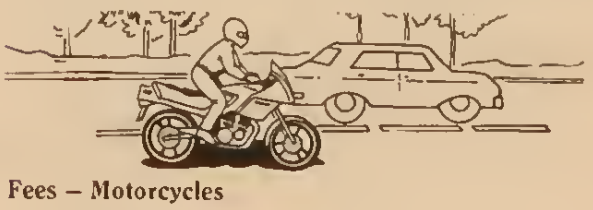
Property Tax

- Fee for an automobile, a truck having a rated capacity of one ton or less and a quadricycle is 2% of average trade in value to a minimum value of $500.00, quadricycle $250.00
- Local option vehicle tax – up to ½% may be assessed

Schedule of Fees

Motor Homes

- Less than 2 years old $250.00
- 2 years old and less than 3 years old $230.00
- 3 years old and less than 4 years old $195.00
- 4 years old and less than 5 years old $150.00
- 5 years old and less than 6 years old $125.00
- 6 years old and less than 7 years old $100.00
- 7 years old and less than 8 years old ..... $ 75.00
- 8 years old and older ..... $ 65.00



Fees – Motorcycles

Subject to a fee in lieu of tax based on age and cc's.

Motor Vehicle Insurance

- Liability Insurance is mandatory (except for motorcycles)
- Owners shall continuously provide insurance of not less than:
  - $25,000 / Bodily Injury or Death of one person in any one accident;
  - $50,000 / Bodily Injury or Death of two persons in any one accident;
  - $10,000 / Injury to or destruction of property of others in any one accident;
- Must carry insurance card issued by insurance company and exhibit upon demand by a law enforcement officer.
- Individual requesting special accommodations please contact local driver exam station.
- Operating a motor vehicle upon the roadways of Montana WITHOUT a valid policy of liability insurance is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not less than $250.00, nor to exceed $500.00 or by imprisonment in the county jail for not more than 10 days or both; 5 points against driving record; 2nd offense not less than $350.00 or by imprisonment in the county jail for not more than 10 days or both, license plates and registration are suspended for 90 days; 180 days 3rd or subsequent offense.

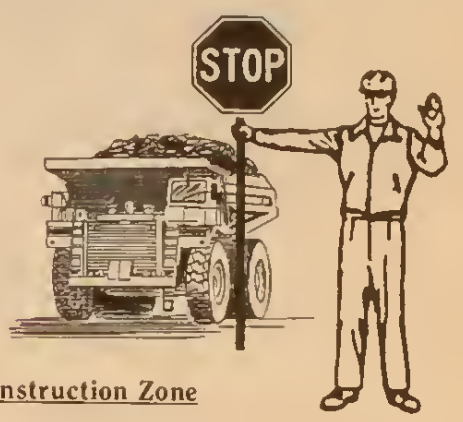
Disposition Fees

- Registration Fee - State General Fund
- License Fee - County/City Road Fund
- Vehicular disposal Fee - Counties/State
- GVW - Highway Trust
- Property Tax or Fee - Local cities, Counties, and School Districts
- Weed Fee - Counties/State
- Highway Patrol Retirement - State
- Sys Fee - State

Mopeds: Defined in Sections 61-1-123(2) as a motor assisted bicycle with a maximum of 2 hp and a designed speed of less than 30 mph. A Driver License is required and motorcycle endorsement are not.

For registration titling information contact your local county treasurer office; for driver license and vehicle inspection contact your local driver exam office.

Upon request, this publication will be made available in an alternative accessible format.



Construction Zone

There is no longer a 35 MPH speed in a construction zone, but is now a Reckless Endangerment of a Highway Worker if they are speeding beyond the limit set by the DOT, local authority, utility company, private contractor; or purposely, knowingly, or negligently drives a motor vehicle in a highway construction zone in such a manner as to endanger persons or property or if the person purposely removes, ignores, or intentionally strikes a traffic control device.